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THE UNITY SERIES. VIII

ART AND CIVILIZATION

ESSAYS ARRANGED AND EDITED

BY

F. S. MARVIN AND
A. F. CLUTTON-BROCK

Dans l'éducation l'art ne doit pas avoir moins de part que la science. Mais il prévaut pour la vie réelle. AUGUSTE COMTE

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PREFACE

THIS volume, like its seven predecessors, arose from a Conference, the seventh 'Unity History School', held in Vienna, in August 1923. The delay in its appearance calls for some explanation. The gathering at this conference was the largest at any of the series, and its international character was marked by the inclusion in the list of lecturers of several Viennese, among them the veteran Professor Strzygowski whose well-marked and well-supported views find a pointed expression in chapter seven. This variety of the contributions, in language as well as thought, caused delays and consultations of many kinds which may be better imagined than described. In the end the original lectures were largely recast, though nothing appears which is not the personal opinion of the writer who signs it. Several of the original lectures were omitted and, with the fresh help and new matter supplied by Mr. Clutton-Brock, the volume assumed its present shape during last year. Then came the other new question of illustrations. They were clearly called for in a book of this kind, though they had not been used in any earlier volume of the series.

The editor is well aware that, even with this elaboration, the book is open to the many criticisms which its title in a Unity Series will suggest. Perhaps it is better so. The work of the artist is always a unique thing, and any attempt to secure a unity of view about questions relating to the works of artists could only succeed superficially, by suppressing individuality and aspects of the truth vital to retain.

One object, however, has been kept in mind by all the

contributors, and it is the attainment of this, so far as they have attained it, that will give the book what usefulness it may possess. They are all convinced that art is an essential expression of the spiritual activity of any civilized community, and has intimate links with the other sides of its activity. It is difficult, often impossible, to bring these fully into the light, but they have tried to do so where they conceived the connexion could be fairly established. They also feel—and it is a view very widely held—that more appreciation of art, and of art as part of history, should find a place in our accustomed study of the past, especially in the courses of history prescribed at the Universities. Much of the help given in the preparation of the book is due to those who feel strongly about this, and hope that the now increasing interest in art in Public Schools and Universities may go much farther and become in the end a true artistic renaissance of the whole nation. There are many signs of this in the schools of all classes. They are recognized in the concluding chapter, and the book as a whole may contribute to that fuller appreciation of art among those who have already an outline of general history in their minds.

F. S. M.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY.
July 1928.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTORY. By F. S. MARVIN . 7

II. THE ORIGIN OF ART. By G. ELLIOT SMITH 20

III. PREHISTORIC ART. By DINA PORTWAY DOBSON 51

IV. THE GREEK REVELATION. By MICHAEL HOLROYD 73

V. LATER GREEK AND ROMAN ART. By MICHAEL HOLROYD 94

VI. THE ART OF ASIA. By LAURENCE BINYON 124

VII. OLD CHRISTIAN ART. By JOSEPH STRZYGOWSKI 152

VIII. MEDIEVAL ART. By JOSEPH STRZYGOWSKI 163

IX. THE ART OF THE RENAISSANCE. By H. GLUECK 174

X. ITALIAN ART OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES. By Mrs. ARTHUR STRONG 183

XI. THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES. By A. F. CLUTTON-BROCK 200

XII. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By A. F. CLUTTON-BROCK 224

XIII. ART IN A MODERN DEMOCRACY. By F. S. MARVIN 250

LIST OF PLATES

Prehistoric Art . . . . . *To face page* 54

Cave Drawings 56

The Bronze Age 66

Greek Helmets and their Cheek-pieces . . . 82

The Lemnia Athene 92

Bust of a Roman 110

Ruins of a Temple at Baalbek 114

Nizami Illumination
Bodhisattva: Ajanta Fresco } 132

Portion of the Ku K'ai-Chih roll
Portion of Ma Yan Yuan Landscape roll } . . . 136

Beauty in the Mirror, by Utamaro
'Coxcomb' Maize Screen, attributed to Koyetsu } . 140

Apse-mosaic in SS. Cosmas and Damian, Rome . . 158

Salah, Mar Yakub 160

Chartres, North Porch: The Visitation and the Prophet Daniel 166

Norwegian Wooden Churches 168

Pazzi Chapel, Florence. Interior 178

Mohammed II, by Gentile Bellini 180

Nude, by Michelangelo, in the Sixtine Chapel . . 188

Design for the Piazza of St. Peter's, by Bernini . . 198

The Elevation of the Cross, by Rubens . . . 204

The Shepherds of Arcady, by Poussin . . . 212

Tea-poy of painted papier mâché 228

Still Life, by Cézanne 246

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I

INTRODUCTORY

By F. S. Marvin

The sixth volume in this series dealt with 'Science and Civilization'; this, with its corresponding title, is intended to be a companion to it. In each the main idea has been the same, to trace in its historic evolution one of the main forms of human activity: in the first case Science, in the second Art. In neither case was any attempt made to offer a complete history, but rather to see the subject under discussion at some of its critical moments, and especially to notice its relation with the general, social, and intellectual conditions of the time.

Looked at in this way, Science presents a more straightforward and simpler study than Art. The progress is much more obvious; the co-operation of all mankind in one growing and common task so clearly the leading feature. When, with the same thoughts in mind, we turn to Art, we are faced at once by the gravest doubts as to the reality of any progress in that sphere, and as to the nature of the co-operation of various races and ages of mankind in the particular art which we are discussing. Most critics of art would probably deny the fact of any general or continuous progress at all, while as to the co-operation of different factors, the pages which follow bear sufficient evidence as to the doubts and complexities that are at once disclosed.

That a social element is implied in all forms of art is clear, and this social factor is so prominent in some of them—dancing and music for instance—that one school of aesthetic philosophers—Tolstoy and, with more discrimination, Guyau—would find in it the origin and essential nature of art itself. Tempting as it is to press such a theory into the service of a 'Unity Series', it will not be

pursued in these pages. It is not the purpose of our book to develop an aesthetic, and such questions will only be dealt with as they arise naturally in the course of the story and seem to illuminate it. But they cannot be avoided altogether, and when they occur, they enliven as well as link up the isolated facts described.

A few words therefore on some of the great underlying problems may serve both as an introduction and as a connexion between the chapters.

What do we mean by Art and what are the differences between Art and Science which occasion their difference in historical evolution? How are they mutually related? How can we reconcile the individual character of the artist's work with the influence of tradition and social environment to which he is subject like every one else? How does the art of the successive epochs which we sketch illustrate their general social and intellectual character? Does the world's art, in an age which is being increasingly unified by science, show any corresponding tendency to unity, and what is the prospect for art in the future, when machinery is more and more supplanting the human hand, and democracy imposes organization with its pressure on the individual? If machinery repeats and democracy organizes, what will become of art?

As a definition of Art, of the shortest and yet widest kind, Francis Bacon's seems the best: 'Ars est Homo additus Naturae', for this would cover man's creative activities of all kinds. And in this broad sense the difference between Art and Science would be that in the former man imposes himself upon nature and in the latter he takes nature into himself. The contrast would need qualification and development in a work on aesthetics, but it is a true and enlightening one and accords well with the dictum of John Stuart Mill: 'In Art man speaks in the Imperative Mood, in Science in the Indicative.'

For our purpose in this book two qualifications are

needed: one of limitation and the other of addition. The definition covers more than we propose to deal with, and, on the other hand, it leaves out altogether what cannot be omitted, viz. the conception of beauty. Now, while we hold that it is impossible to draw a sharp line of demarcation between those creations of man which are artistic and those which are not, yet for many purposes—and among others the writing of this book—it is useful to deal specially with those works or expressions of man's mind which are called the 'Fine Arts', and the word 'Fine' brings in the idea of beauty. 'Fine Art', said Sir Sidney Colvin,[1] 'is everything which man makes in one way rather than another, freely and with premeditation, in order to express and arouse emotion, in obedience to laws of rhythmic movement or utterance or regulated design, and with results independent of direct utility and capable of affording to man permanent and disinterested delight.'

With some doubt as to either the meaning or necessity of 'premeditation' in this definition, for the rest it seems as good an attempt at the almost impossible as could be made in fifty words. It is comprehensive and well balanced; it brings in all the points for which advocates of various schools contend; it does not throw too great a weight on any one of them; and it wisely excludes altogether any mention of conceptions of the 'absolute' which may remain as an unexplained residuum in all philosophical analysis, but about which for that very reason we are unable to make any definite statement.

We can, however, state definitely the topics on which it has been found possible to say something within the limits, and subject to the general purpose, of this book. A good deal will be found about architecture, sculpture, and painting; something, though perhaps not quite so much, about the minor arts of domestic use; something about decoration. Allusion is made, where it seems relevant and

[1] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th Edition, Article 'Fine Arts'.

enlightening, to the contemporary movements in poetry and music, but in these spheres there is no attempt to present a continuous picture. Poetry is amply treated in other works, while music offers in itself a magnificent field for a similar study parallel to this. On the practical arts such as engineering, sanitation, or even cookery, very little if anything will be found. The reason is obvious from the definition which we have adopted, provisionally and for the purpose in hand, from Sir Sidney Colvin. It is of art in his sense that we are primarily concerned in these studies, and the differences which mark it off from science leap at once to the eye.

Art is free and individual and appeals to the emotions. Herein the artist differs in his immediate activity most clearly from the man of science. Both are no doubt formed and inspired by the collective mind of man. In a general sense their lives, like the lives of all of us, are a function of the Past which speaks through them whether they are conscious of it or not, under the conditions of the age and place in which they live and work. But in the case of the artist his immediate imagination possesses him. He must express or create something which is thus immediately present to him, and the historical evolution, the social environment, the effect on others, are at that moment non-existent for him. With the man of science or the practician of any sort it is different. To him it is of the first moment to know what others have thought or done in the same matter before him; and on that he builds. Hence the continuity in the latter case is complete and conscious and the line of progress obvious and direct.

Yet it is clear that when we put the contrast thus sharply we are exaggerating the difference and ascribing an ideal freedom to the artist which, as an artist, he may approach more and more nearly in his own consciousness, but which as a member of a society and in a sequence and community of workers he cannot possess. Every art is,

like every human being, conditioned by the Past. Every art is also in part bound up with men's other activities, and perhaps specially with what we call 'science'. And the arts may be graded from this point of view according to the amount of their admixture with science and their immersion in the material world. In this order architecture would be at one end of the scale and poetry at the other. For every one would include architecture among the arts, even the fine arts; yet in all ages and countries it has been largely, if not mainly, determined by thoughts of utility; and it is steeped in matter and governed through and through by science. At the other end of the scale poetry, which has least matter in its composition and is the purest form of emotional and imaginative expression, is yet bound up at least as closely as any other art with the whole life of the community in which it appears. 'Let him', said Goethe to Eckermann, 'who will not believe that much of Shakespeare's greatness appertains to his great vigorous time, only ask himself the question whether a phenomenon so astounding would be possible in the present England of 1824, in these evil days of criticizing and hair-splitting journals.'

It is this connected aspect, the social reactions of art, that we aim specially at exhibiting in this book. The old and simple terminology of the subject would in fact suit our purpose just as well as any later analysis. For if we think that in Art man is trying to see and to express the beauty that is in and around him, and thereby to make the world a more beautiful place than he found it, and that in Science he is endeavouring to find the true relations between the facts of the world and of his own nature, yet this Beauty and this Truth will be intimately connected. Both are rooted in the upward striving of the same spirit, both ends are to be achieved by working on the same material universe, and by methods that often touch and sometimes flash with a kindred light.

We begin then with some account of the physiological basis of the aesthetic sense and of our artistic powers. These are described in the next chapter, wherein we see how man's earliest progenitors and his next-of-kin developed and co-ordinated those senses, especially of sight and hearing, which were to serve as the channels and instruments of art. Their co-ordination and improvement by the nervous and muscular apparatus which gives us mobility made our forefather at once a craftsman and a potential artist. And in the earliest stages of his artistic career we find remains which show both a sense of beauty and the expression of an imagined ideal. The men of the Old Stone Age have left us, in colour and in line, marvellous expressions of what they saw around them, especially of animal life. The impulse to express his thoughts in pictorial form and to adorn the cave, the weapon, or the garment, is characteristic of the Old Stone man and may well have been as early as his expression in articulate speech.

At a later stage it disappeared, and in the New Stone Age the artistic sense took only, or primarily, the form of decoration which is abundant in the designs with which men covered their weapons and utensils. In this case the alliance is clearly shown between art in the wider sense of making things and the narrower sense which involves the idea of beauty. The primitive man, when making a polished flint as a weapon, could not divest himself of the desire to make it look beautiful as well as serve a useful end. This mingling of the useful with the beautiful is natural to all healthy and unspoilt beings, and in our more hopeful moments we may fancy that even now mankind in this respect is beginning a return to his primeval heritage.

In Egypt and the similar lands of early theocratic culture which come next in our survey, the buildings become more massive and elaborate, like the societies

which put them up. The decoration and the smaller artistic objects which trace a descent from the New Stone men became steadily finer and more varied. The portraiture is excellent, the furniture beautiful and strangely modern.

The Greeks, who form the next stage in the artistic record, combine an ancestry from the North-West with influences from South and East, especially from Egypt and the Aegean. They are of capital importance in Art as in Science, because with them a standard of beauty was consciously set up which might be related with their general scientific and philosophical ideas, and gained coherence thereby and a power to influence the artistic tradition of Western people ever since. To some of them at least there now appeared, for the first time in history, the idea of an absolute beauty of line and of shape, above all in the human form, which it behoved men to strive after as one of the highest objects of living. This was the new thing in art which the Greeks introduced, just as the equation, the type of abstract thought, was the new thing in science. It was based in their mind on observation of the external world and seemed to them capable of expression in formal, even numerical, terms.

Against this aspect of art among the Greeks a reaction set in during the decadence of the Greco-Roman world which the learned author of our fifth chapter attributes mainly to the North. As to the relative proportion of contributing influences opinions will always differ, but the broad changes are plain. Greek standards, which the Romans in a rougher and less original way had carried on, fell into abeyance, and the new art which we trace chiefly in Italy at the dawn of the Renaissance, as we traced classical art first in Greece, bears evidence of varied sources in East and North as well as in the classic soil of Italy herself. The northern spirit brought a deeper natural feeling, a more individual expression, as well as the new

principles of construction which play so large a part in what we know as Gothic art.

In the heyday of the Renaissance the amalgamating process is complete. From that time onward we cannot speak any longer of distinct national arts in the West. Style and fashions spread and mingle from one country to another, and the nondescript, amorphous art of the present day, stamped so deeply with the art of the past and of the whole world, is now open for imitative influence and study.

But even in the melting-pot new forms are taking shape and new elements are at work. To estimate these we need to turn back to another line of thought which first became prominent at the end of the Renaissance. Descartes is the name, and to him is mainly due not only a new direction in general philosophy but a powerful influence in art and the philosophy of art. Its artistic fruits are dealt with in the XIth and XIIth chapters; the birth of modern aesthetic must be mentioned here.

This birth was the result of the union of two forces: one directly descending from Descartes, the other engendered by the discoveries of classical archaeology. Descartes died in 1650. Within the century which followed, the greatest mass of works of ancient art which have ever been given back to the world were unearthed at Herculanaeum and Pompeii. Most of these were discovered in the first half of the eighteenth century, while Winckelmann, who was to stir the modern world to a sympathetic interest, was still a young man. These works stirred his mind to enthusiasm and speculation as to the laws of artistic production and the nature of the beautiful, and the speculation fitted in well with the new idealist philosophy which arose from Descartes' work. The new direction which Descartes gave to philosophy turned it to the nature of the mind itself. We were to find the meaning and the truth of things in the way we thought about them; clearness and consistency were to be the ultimate

tests, and it was inevitable to ask at once about the objects of ancient art which were then being uncovered, 'Why do we think them beautiful?' Baumgarten was the first to attempt a consistent and philosophic answer in 1739, and to him Kant, about whom more must be said in a moment, always admitted his great indebtedness.

But another branch of art was swelling the stream at the same time. Between Descartes' birth in 1596 and the death of Leibniz in 1716 opera had begun to flourish both in France, Italy, Germany, and England. This, too, gave fuel to the philosophic fire. Leibniz, amid his universal philosophizing, let fall remarks about the nature of music which agree quite well with Kant's masterly construction of an aesthetic philosophy which appeared at the end of the century. 'Music', said Leibniz, 'is counting performed by the mind without knowing that it is counting', that is to say, it is a case of reason acting unconsciously under the influence of feeling, 'penser avec des sons', as a neat modern Frenchman puts it.

It was in fact an age in which, stirred to the depths by the inrush of a multitude of new and exciting events and emotions, men of a philosophic turn, to be found then as always rather outside England than in it, and especially in Germany, tried to collect themselves and see things as a whole—a construction of the mind, as Descartes had taught them. Of these Kant is easily the most eminent and influential. He was born during the early life of Winckelmann, and while the new discoveries were being made, but his great aesthetic treatise, *The Critique of the Power of Judgement*, did not appear till 1790 and was a pendant and complement to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The title itself implies a wider point of view than had ever been taken before by the philosophic critics of art. Kant places the aesthetic consciousness at the centre, mediating in the mind between the realm of pure reason and the region of will or desire. It is an activity of our reason

acting on parallel lines to that activity which seeks scientific truth and the third which aims at the practical ends of morality. Contrasted with them, it contains essentially the element of pleasure, and is the meeting-point of sense and reason. But we are not to think of this 'pleasure' as mere sense gratification: the pleasure is spiritual without any idea of self-interest. The idea of purposiveness in the object occasions the pleasure; but there must be no end to be served beyond that of the artistic gratification itself. Beauty is the expression of reason in sensuous form, and its attainment is a personal pleasure but open to all men alike in proportion to their aesthetic development.

It is of course beyond our scope either to criticize this presentation or trace its influence on later thought. It is quoted here to show the high place then claimed for art at one of the greatest intellectual crises in European history by one of the most penetrating, perhaps the most dominant, of modern minds. However we may judge of its philosophical validity, it is a capital point in the history of thought, that the leading thinker in modern times, who spoke amid the storm of revolution and laid down as a first principle the supremacy of the dictates of the individual soul, should have found a central and commanding position for the consciousness of beauty. If now, in the sequel of the revolution, we envisage man as more and more the master of his fate, studying and moulding nature to serve his own higher ends, Kant's view of art gains in importance. It should recall us still more urgently to the need of co-ordinating sense, knowledge, and power to the ideal of order, beauty, and happy satisfaction in what we do or make.

But the less hopeful spirits call our attention strongly to the other side. Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement*—the aesthetic treatise—appeared at the very moment when the steam-engine began to displace the

hand-workers and the mechanical age came in. Ominous conjuncture, say the critics; just as men begin to reason deeply about the nature of art, they lose the real love of it and machinery begins to rule the world.

The coincidence is certainly striking and demands some searching thought. In the first place we cannot imagine any inherent connexion between theorizing about a thing and inability to produce it. The case of the Greeks is conclusive on that point. But, in the second place, need we rate ourselves so low? This age of science and mechanical power has witnessed also some marvels in the realm of art. Our own great school of landscape painters in England and the French school who figure largely in chapter xii would have been considerable features in any age. In architecture the Americans are meeting the problems of monotony and machine production with brilliant and impressive ideas. Last, but by no means least, this same age has seen a greater outpouring of poetry and music than any age before; more, some would say, than all the earlier ages put together. Those who deplore our inartistic horrors will be found as a rule to say little or nothing about music and poetry. They are concerned, and rightly, with the squalor and monotony of our towns and the decay of taste in the domestic arts. But though art is one, it has many facets, and it may be that all its sides cannot be lit up at once. Thousands of the workers who live without artistic discomfort in the squalor of a mining village find more and deeper pleasure in music than many of those who deplore their lot.

Some expectations and suggestions for the future are given in the concluding chapter: as to the present, it is clear that the diversion of thought, energy, and wealth to the development and application of science, to the prosecution of trade, to the education and levelling up of the masses, has lessened men's attention, say for the last two hundred years, to the making and enjoyment of beautiful

things. Leaving out for the moment poetry and music and even the increased enjoyment of nature in sea and land, it is clear that the cult and taste for beauty in things that we make, has received in the industrial period a set-back from which we are only now slowly and with difficulty recovering.

But nothing except death or the extinction of our planet is irretrievable. There has been one-sided growth in human history before, and as our present is correcting the past, we may look forward to the future to correct us.

At the moment public interest and the best brains of the world are largely devoted to the spread and application of science, the extension of trade, and the preservation of the peace of the world. It is not too much to say that nine-tenths of each rising generation now turn without question to such pursuits and to teaching, and that it does not occur to as much as one-tenth of their parents to direct their children to any form of art as a livelihood. There is no livelihood in it, except for an absurdly small proportion of the population. This disproportion of interest, this excessive tension of the practical life, must be reduced before we can settle down to enjoy and increase the beauty of the world and properly train and employ its craftsmen.

Engineering is now the popular vocation for young and clever men, just as architecture, sculpture, or painting were at the Renaissance. A better balance, and various combinations between the two types of activity, will be achieved in proportion as the peace of a new synthesis takes possession of the minds of men and the government of the world.

But machine production affects in a wider way not only the class of artists and producers but the whole mass of products and the minds of those who feed upon them. Creative activity, often of a high order, goes to the making of a machine, and the artist's work also, whether painter or poet, may be equally fine, whether his work remains

unique or is reproduced by lithographic process or multiplied by the printing-press. The great difference produced by machinery is the possibility of indefinite reproduction of copies, and the fact that most of those who come in contact with the artist's work in modern days do so only in the pale reflection of a mechanical reproduction. How far can we allow the name of 'art' to these? And how to stimulate a larger number to execute and appreciate the original and truly artistic work?

On this we shall have more to say in our concluding chapter. It will be seen to be largely a question of education, and in education, as in industry or government, the supreme difficulty in a Great Society, highly organized, is to preserve the balance between an efficient and unified community and the free and active individual. The organization and the unity are essential, and science has now given us the means to achieve them. But in the realm of spirit this process is in itself coercive, and directly counters the independence of mind from which art is born. There is a natural war between a system which deals with men in masses and art which must spring from free and self-expressing individuals. But even so our historic survey will end on a note of hope, for side by side with the growth of the democratic machine there may be traced at the present day a rival and corrective tendency to exalt the individual as the highest arbiter in every question, the judge of morals and religion, the owner of all rights and source of all inspiration.

The reconcilement of this inevitable paradox is the supreme problem for the future of humanity. To live, it must hold together; to grow, it must have freedom and individuality. Art which has both sides—a social source and application and an individual inspiration and creative act—should prove the true solvent of the contradiction, the natural bond of the growing soul of man.

II

THE ORIGIN OF ART

By G. Elliot Smith

Discussing the subject of this essay in the introductory lecture at l'École du Louvre (*Apollo*, p. 1), M. Salomon Reinach claimed that a work of art differs in an essential quality from the products of human activity called forth by the immediate exigencies of life. It is the expression of a free and disinterested activity that aims not at satisfying an immediate necessity but at awakening a sentiment, a lively emotion—admiration, pleasure, curiosity, and sometimes terror.

My aim is to consider the factors that led to the creation of art. It is not enough simply to claim that mankind is endowed with a feeling for beauty which must find expression. What needs to be explained is the nature of the specific circumstances that provided the opportunities for, or forced upon men's attention, the realization of beauty, and determined the distinctive forms assumed by early art. For it will become abundantly evident in the course of the discussion that early man attained a remarkable degree of skill as a craftsman attempting to accomplish certain aims for purely utilitarian reasons before the conscious effort to express beauty or call forth emotion manifested itself. Many of man's earliest attempts at what perhaps are too hastily called 'art' have to be judged by other criteria. For if some of them offend our feeling for beauty it must not be forgotten that the reason for this is not because the craftsman was lacking in aesthetic appreciation or technical skill. He was modelling figures or painting animals to achieve certain utilitarian aims. Beauty and the delights of technical skill were not primarily taken into consideration.

My first object, therefore, is not to discuss aesthetics so much as to explain how the circumstances developed that provided the opportunity for the display of artistic qualities and the stimulus to provoke their expression. Before this problem can profitably be considered it is essential that I should call attention to the biological factors that enabled man's ancestors to develop the ability to appreciate form and colour and the manipulative skill to give expression to these powers.

The ability to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of experience obviously depends upon certain powers of vision, touch, and hearing. It is the merest truism to claim that form and colour could not be enjoyed until sight had been developed in such a way as to make comprehensible the meaning of the obtrusive facts regarding the world and space. Nor could speech and music be created and appreciated until hearing had been enriched with a fuller meaning than is implied in the mere ability to understand and respond to emotional cries or to imitate sounds.

Such aptitude for the appreciation of sensory experience is intimately associated with the executive skill of the artist who gives expression to what he sees, hears, and feels. Art is in fact one of the expressions of muscular skill.

It is no part of my aim in this essay to discuss the nature of aesthetic sentiment nor to argue whether the appreciation of beauty is in any way dependent upon the sympathy or fellow-feeling of the spectator. The pretence that the latter must project himself into a work of art in order to realize its aesthetic qualities is a crude form of animistic speculation that only obscures the real point at issue. Yet any real work of art makes a wider appeal than the mere display of technical sufficiency or the satisfaction of a rational idea. Its aesthetic value is essentially its affective quality, the feeling of pleasure and admiration it excites.

All that I am concerned with at present, however, is the study of the biological factors that made possible

the emergence in the human family of the ability to appreciate the beauty of form and colour and the subtle symbolism of sound and to create works of art that give expression to these powers. While it is probable that man alone of living creatures has any real aesthetic feeling, it can safely be claimed as a demonstrable fact that he alone is endowed with the power to create works of art. It may be argued, however, that the plumage of a peacock or a bird of paradise is in itself evidence of an appreciation of beauty and a potent factor in that sexual selection upon which Darwin placed such emphasis. Further, it might be claimed that the musical abilities of many birds and their skill in imitating the sounds they hear are fatal to the claim that man has a monopoly of artistic aptitude.

But if these examples of instinctive activities and skill in imitation are not altogether relevant to the discussion of the means whereby the immediate ancestors of the human family acquired their artistic powers they should clearly be kept in mind as a precaution against a misunderstanding of the real aim of our inquiry.

The evolution of the ability to appreciate form and colour and to acquire a feeling for beauty was genetically associated with the process of learning to perform skilled movements under the guidance of visual control. This could occur only in a mammal with unspecialized hands capable of being adapted as instruments for the performance of an infinite variety of complicated actions. Incidentally these plastic instruments became converted into highly delicate organs of tactile discrimination, whereby the ability to appreciate form and texture made possible by the cultivation of vision was reinforced and charged with a fuller meaning. The hand became the instrument for acquiring a fuller understanding of the nature of things seen and handled. The process of handling attained an infinitely wider range of usefulness and precision when guided by stereoscopic vision, which not only excited a

more intense curiosity to examine objects seen, but also made possible the orderly movements and the delicate adjustments of the fingers to make exact manipulation possible. Thus the acquisition of skill in movement was intimately associated with the cultivation of tactile discrimination under the guidance of more refined visual control. But such manipulation not only brought an increased understanding of form and texture but also a fuller realization of the meaning of things and events.

My aim in the first half of this chapter is to interpret what is known of the evolution of those powers of vision and manual dexterity that make possible the cultivation of artistic understanding and expression.

The Attainment of Artistic Skill

It is the merest truism to say that man is the only living creature competent to attempt the highly skilled muscular actions involved in the work of the artist. Nor can there be much doubt that he alone is endowed with the visual discrimination and realization of meaning to appreciate beauty of form and colour and to feel the impulse to reproduce what he sees and feels. What I propose to discuss in this section is the manner in which man's ancestors acquired the eyes to see and the hands to express what they saw—in other words the sequence of biological changes that eventually determined the circumstances out of which were created the feeling for beauty and the ability to give expression to it.

I do not intend to enter into a long discussion of the factors involved in this process of evolution. This I have already attempted in the *Essays on the Evolution of Man* (1927). It is more useful to consider simply those aspects of the wider problem that are directly relevant to the issue with which I am now concerned—the acquisition of the ability to appreciate form and the manual dexterity to perform the skilled work involved in art.

The attainment of the intellectual qualities that distinguish man from all other living creatures was made possible by the fact that before the commencement of the Tertiary Period the behaviour of a group of very primitive mammals (nearly akin to the Tree Shrews still living in Borneo and elsewhere) came more directly under the control of vision. This happened in the case of many other tree-living creatures: but the attainment of increased visual control was fraught with such far-reaching possibilities in the case of the Tree Shrews because their hands had not become specialized, that is, had not lost their primitive simplicity and plasticity: so that they could be adapted to new and increasingly varied purposes under the guidance of vision. Hence the increased reliance upon visual direction was of immediate biological use, because it enabled the mobile hands to acquire an ever-increasing range of new activities, and it widened the scope of the animal's behaviour. If zoologists are not yet prepared to recognize the admission of the Tree Shrew into the Order Primates, the possibility of which has recently been adumbrated by Professor Le Gros Clark, the new evidence that is now being investigated seems to justify its recognition as a Half-Primate—a creature so nearly akin to the Primates that it has only just missed qualifying for admission to the Order. For if the development of the visual parts of the brain had been carried only a little further the Tree Shrew would have conformed in all essential characters to the distinctive attributes of a primitive Lemur.

In the Lemurs the reliance upon the guidance of vision and the closely related powers of manual dexterity, which are linked in a functional sense with such control, have been developed a stage further than in the Tree Shrews. Vision, however, has not yet completely supplanted smell as the dominant sense.

But in one of the groups of Lemuroids a slight enhance-

ment of the role of vision sufficed to effect the tremendous revolution of conferring upon that sense the control of behaviour. Although this group, known as the Tarsioids, was already differentiated from the other Lemurs at the beginning of the Tertiary Period, one of them has survived throughout the vast span of time—perhaps millions of years—until the present day without any material changes in its structure. The Spectral Tarsier still living in Borneo, Java, and the Philippines is thus what has been called 'a living fossil'. Its survival makes it possible for us to get a precise idea of the nature of that remote ancestor of ourselves which first acquired the ability to control its behaviour and to cultivate the skill of its hands predominantly by vision.

Figure 1. The Spectral Tarsier (from the writer's *Evolution of Man*).

Tarsius, to give this interesting little creature its technical name, has a further claim upon our interest. For as the Tree Shrew represents the survival of an ancestor that just failed to attain the rank of a Primate, so the Tarsier can be regarded as the survival of a Half-Ape that just failed to attain the rank of a true ape or monkey. This statement brings us to the crux of the whole argument I am endeavouring to develop—to discover the essential factor that conferred upon man's ancestors the ability to cultivate the progressive development of muscular skill, which eventually led to the emergence of the powers pre-eminently distinctive of human rank—the seeing eye and

the understanding ear, the adaptable hand and the ability to learn by experience and to share the knowledge so gained in a communion of understanding with one's fellows.

The flattening of the face in *Tarsius* brought the eyes to the front of the head, so that instead of looking sideways they now looked forward; and the extreme reduction of the snout permitted the visual fields of the two eyes to overlap, so that binocular vision was established. But certain observations, both of structural peculiarities and of behaviour, suggest that, although the Tarsier had binocular vision, it had not yet acquired real stereoscopic vision—the ability to appreciate three-dimensional space, to recognize depth, to blend the two images of an object so as to get a consciousness of solidity and of the relative positions in space of a series of objects.

If the Tarsier be compared with a primitive monkey of corresponding size many striking contrasts will be revealed in the brain and eyes, in the complexity of the automatic movements of the eyes and hands, and in the degree of muscular skill.

The brain of the monkey is enormously bigger—even four or five times the weight, which implies a much more extensive increase in the area of the cerebral cortex. This expansion affects not merely the cortical area concerned with the reception of the optic tracts and the impulses from the eyes transmitted by them, but also the parts of the brain concerned with touch and hearing, with the control of skilled movements, and especially the front end of the cerebral hemisphere (the prefrontal cortex), the significant expansion of which fills out the front of the cranium and eventually causes the fullness of the forehead.

The prefrontal area is essentially an outgrowth from the so-called motor cortex and affords a rough index of the ability to learn skilled movements. But experiment

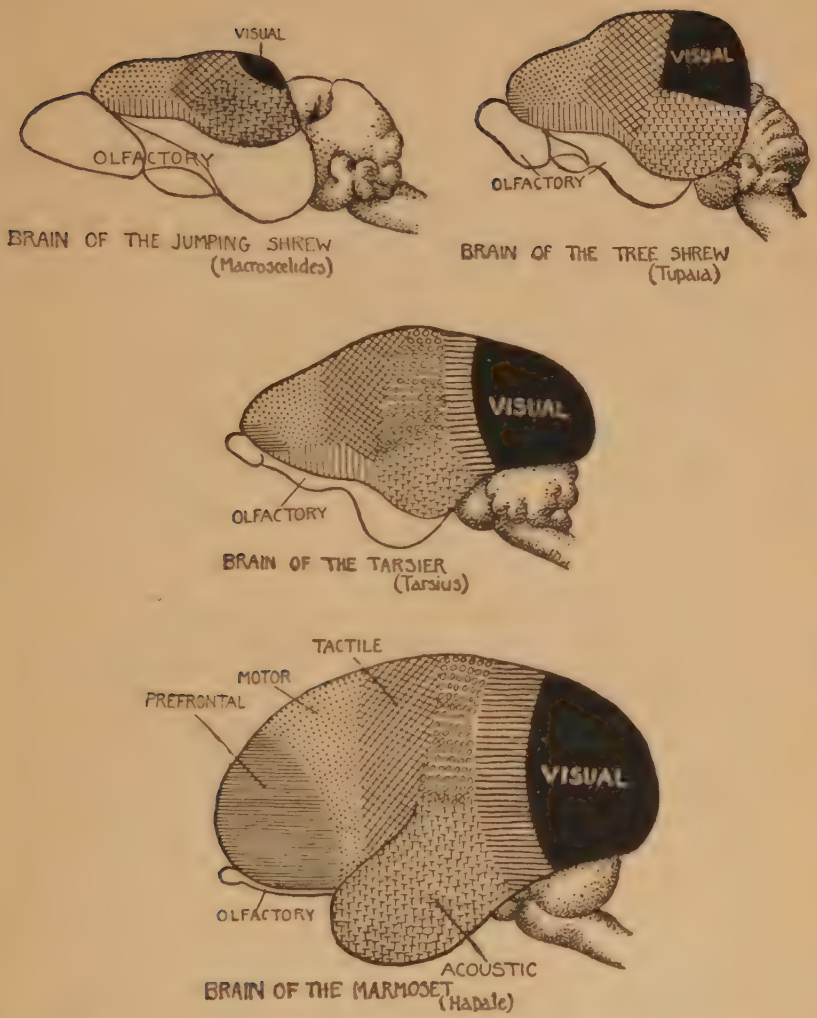

Figure 2. Diagrams of a series of mammalian brains to suggest the process whereby man's ancestors acquired the abilities on which the appreciation of beauty ultimately depends.

has shown that it is intimately associated with the power of moving the two eyes in co-operation the one with the other for the performance of what are known as conjugate movements. In most mammals the two eyes are functionally linked together in this way, but only for a very limited range of movements, especially in the horizontal plane. In the monkey, however, coincidently with the sudden expansion of the prefrontal area, the range of conjugate movements is widely extended and they attain a greater degree of precision. Hence the ability is acquired of so moving the eyes as to follow the outlines of a large object and obtain an appreciation of its form.

But this significant prefrontal area also controls the mechanism for bringing about the convergence of the two eyes upon any object. This complicated muscular action implies something more than merely co-ordinating a series of muscles for the performance of a nicely balanced adjustment. It is the necessary preliminary for fixing the gaze upon an object for the purpose of examining it. It is the most intensive form of fixing the attention, and for the Primates can be regarded as, so to speak, the essential factor for mental concentration in its widest sense.

But the acquisition of these wider powers of exact conjugate movements and convergence of the eyes leads to a series of other important developments. Until it has attained a wide range and a high degree of precision a mammal with binocular vision is unable to bring the two images of any given object with exactitude on to corresponding places in the retinae of the two eyes. When the linked movements come under the higher control associated with the expansion of the prefrontal cortex, the two eyes can then be moved with such a nicely regulated precision that the function of one sharply circumscribed spot in one retina can be correlated exactly with that of an equally definite spot in the other retina. When this happens the necessary conditions have been provided for the

development of a particularly sensitive area—macula lutea—in each retina, in virtue of which it becomes possible to detect the details of objects seen, such as the texture of materials, and to develop a higher degree of discrimination of form and colour than is possible without a macula. Hence the prefrontal expansion is correlated not only with the sudden widening of the range of conjugate movements of the eyes and enhancement of the power of visual concentration, but also with enormously greater powers of visual appreciation and discrimination. Incidentally also these newly acquired abilities are an essential part of the preparation for the psychical fusion of images which confers the stereoscopic quality upon vision.

When one of the Tarsioid group first acquired these stereoscopic powers it saw the world as no other living creature had ever seen it before; and with the new vision it became transformed into a monkey endowed with all the possibilities of achieving in its descendants the intellectual supremacy distinctive of mankind.

But the first effect of the acquisition of these new powers of visual appreciation was an intense stimulation of the animal's curiosity to handle the wonderful things revealed to it. And in responding to this impulse the hands were guided more efficiently by vision than before, not merely because the hands and the things handled were seen more sharply and clearly, but also because their positions in space were more exactly located in virtue of the newly acquired stereoscopic powers. Hence stereoscopic vision brought the stimulus and the guidance for the attainment of enormously greater skill in movement than was possible before. From the cultivation of the possibilities thus created man's ancestors began to acquire wonderful dexterity and an ever-increasing range of variety and skill in motor adaptation to the changing circumstances of every moment. Under these influences

the hands became the most marvellous instruments for complex and nicely balanced activities.

But something more than mere dexterity was gained in this process of educating the movements of the hands under the guidance of vision. When under the prompting of the wonder excited by the new powers of vision objects were handled, it was not merely skill in movement that was being acquired, but also a training in tactile discrimination and in the correlation of the information gained by touch and vision. This is revealed in the progressive expansion of those parts of the brain concerned primarily with tactile functions, as well as the parietal area that links together the tactile and visual territories. This widening of the powers of understanding the nature of the world as it appeals to the eyes and hands incidentally involved also a growth in the appreciation of the meaning of all experience. For in the process of handling objects some dim ideas must gradually have emerged of the nature of the forces that were acting, what was likely to be the effect of a certain action. Stereoscopic vision enabled its possessor not only to see the world in which it lived, but also conferred the germs of the power of interpreting what it saw and also of adapting or controlling events to suit its purpose.

This fuller comprehension of the meaning of things and events enhanced the significance of all experience. Among the most surprising effects of the acquisition of stereoscopic vision was the sudden expansion of the auditory territory of the cerebral cortex, and the increase in acoustic discrimination and vocal aptitude. To an animal witnessing the events happening around it and in some degree understanding what was happening sounds acquired a much fuller meaning—a much more intimate integration with other sensory experience—than they had when they were little more than signals evoking instinctive responses and emotions. When a monkey learns to recognize a grass-

hopper by its form, colour, and movements the sound which the insect emits can be referred to and associated with the visual experience. It thereby acquires a fuller meaning in the sense that the sound can evoke a memory of the visual picture of the grasshopper, as well as its 'feel' and taste. This enhancement of the meaning of acoustic experience is due in large measure to another factor. The cultivation of muscular skill that has been seen to be so intimately bound up with the acquisition of stereoscopic vision confers upon the animal extensive powers of vocal skill, which are put to immediate use (for example, by the primitive South American monkeys) as a means of intercommunication. Hence they become constantly alert in the cultivation of an increasingly delicate auditory discrimination and appreciation of its symbolism. Although these events happened at a vastly remote period of time, long ages before articulate speech was acquired, it is important to recognize that the germs of the distinctively human attribute of speech were planted when the first monkeys came into being—when the acquisition of stereoscopic vision widened the meaning of all experience, including that of hearing.

Even in the penultimate stage of the evolutionary process the part played by vision in the development of speech is vastly greater than is generally recognized. For it was only when the powers of visual discrimination and memory had been brought to such a pitch that man's immediate ancestors learned sharply to distinguish one object and its associations from another and to appreciate all the manifold qualities of each experience. Then it became necessary to devise some acoustic symbol as a sort of shorthand to summarize the essentially visual knowledge and to devise names for particular objects and verbs to define their behaviour.

Speech is in fact primarily the act of labelling with certain arbitrary sounds the information gained mainly by

vision. But such powers of enunciating particular sounds are highly skilled muscular actions, which were made possible in the first instance by stereoscopic vision. The objection may be raised that visual control can have no possible influence upon the development of skill in the muscles of phonation and articulation. But the evolution of the cortical instrument that makes the attainment of muscular skill possible, although primarily concerned with the development of manual dexterity, affects all skilled movement.

In training the hands the muscles of the body as a whole are involved in the process of education, such as the maintenance of appropriate postures and other forms of co-operation; and the nervous mechanisms that are built up in the cultivation of 'handiness' can be put at the service of any or all the muscles of the body for the acquisition of skill.

In this rough sketch of the process of evolution I have attempted to indicate how intimately the cultivation of vision and of appreciation of the meaning of visual experience are linked up with the development of muscular skill and the enhancement of the value of all sensory experience.

The powers that afterwards find expression in the achievements of the artist and musician are thus acquired simultaneously—by this I mean the aptitude to appreciate the symbolism of sight and sound is intimately linked up with the attainment of the muscular skill to give expression to the things seen and heard and the feelings that such experience excites.

The cultivation of sensory discrimination, which has been seen to be intimately associated with the development of muscular skill by the hands, plays a very important part in the attainment of still greater muscular skill. It would unduly complicate this brief statement to discuss the part played by impulses from the skin, muscles, joints,

&c., in the regulation of muscular activities and the attainment of skill. I merely mention this here to remind the reader of the complexity of the process and especially of the fact that when the eye is learning to direct the hand in the acquisition of dexterity there is being built up in the nervous system a very intricate machinery for integrating a great variety of factors to co-operate in a common aim.

Before passing on to discuss certain other aspects of the expression of visual control I must make a brief comment upon the implications of the arguments used in this statement. Although no serious student can doubt the reality of evolution, nothing whatever is known of the processes by which it is effected. In the effort to frame a working hypothesis to suggest in a tentative way the means whereby man's ancestors may possibly have acquired the distinctively human enhancement of intelligence I have used language that seems to imply the transmission of acquired characters. It would be idle to pretend that there is any convincing experimental evidence to justify such an attitude. On the other hand, it seems impossible even to frame a working hypothesis of the evolution of intelligence without assuming that the demonstrable facts enumerated in this statement must be functionally linked together in some such way as I have indicated. Unless it is assumed that the effects of the enormously enhanced muscular skill, practised so constantly as to become an unconscious automatism, is in some way responsible for the extension of the range and precision of the conjugate eye-movements in the apes and man—acts of vast complexity and delicacy performed automatically—there seems to be no alternative other than the assumption that the delicate harmonizing of the complicated activities of the fourteen muscles concerned in moving the two eyes was due to a lucky chance occurring precisely at a moment when it was biologically useful to the animal. But so

many equally 'lucky' events also happened at the same moment that it becomes an undue strain upon one's credulity to assume there was no genetic connexion between the effects of individual experience and the progress of the race.

It seems to me that the doctrine of 'organic selection'—the claim that psychical choice and effort play an essential role, determining, guiding, or moulding the course of evolution (William McDougall, *Body and Mind*, 1911, p. 256)—while true so far as it goes, is not adequate to explain what is known to happen.

It was a voluntary action upon the part of the Tree Shrew's ancestors to climb trees to obtain an ampler supply of attractive food. By a voluntary effort on the part of those that did take to living in trees greater agility was acquired. Both were voluntary acts that put the animal in a position to profit from any chance variations of structure and function which might develop.

But it is just because the chance variations required to convert a Tarsioid into a monkey are so complex, though precisely of the kind that the animal can acquire in some measure of its individual striving, that 'organic selection' without some measure of inheritance of acquired characters hardly seems adequate to effect the progress.

This diversion is not altogether relevant: but I have so often been asked whether or not the implications of my argument were conscious and deliberate that it seems desirable to refer to the matter here.

The effects so far considered of the acquisition of stereoscopic vision upon the development of knowledge and skill represent merely the beginning of a process which gradually increased in force and influence. After long aeons of time the ability to learn from individual experience was supplemented by the new power of sharing the knowledge accumulated by his fellows and by those who had gone before.

I do not intend to discuss the general aspects of this attainment of the distinctively human type of mind, but will refer only to two aspects of the process.

The attainment of a high degree of manual dexterity and tactile discrimination was intimately related to the development of the power in the hands to appreciate the weight, form, and texture of objects, and to obtain a fuller understanding of the nature of things and forces in the outside world. The cultivation of these newly acquired aptitudes was a very important factor in the progressive development of manual skill as well as the appreciation of the results that followed certain actions.

In the ancestors of man the acquisition of the visual ability to examine and interpret had as one of its results the stimulation of an interest in the behaviour of their fellows and especially in the study of facial expression, which therefore came to be regarded more and more precisely as an index of the emotions and intentions. Man himself seems to have come, almost unconsciously, to realize that his fellows were regarding him as he was watching them. Hence perhaps developed the custom of looking to the eyes of his fellows for the clearest revelation of their emotions, friendship or hatred, affection or contempt, approval or disapproval, so running through the whole gamut of those feelings which one human being can entertain of another.

In early times the first makers of portrait statues regarded the eyes as the most potent demonstration of life in their creations. But men and women in all ages have realized that the eyes are the most expressive instruments of speech without words—another indication of the significance of vision as a means of human intercommunication, which in an entirely different way found such striking extension when writing was invented.

In mankind sexual selection is influenced predominantly by vision—by the appreciation of beauty.

The fundamental importance of vision in the evolution of man's intellect is revealed by the obtrusive part played by visual symbolism in the phraseology of our common speech.

The Earliest Sculpture and Painting

So far in this chapter I have been discussing the purely biological problem of how man's ancestors acquired the eyes to see and the hands to reproduce, the curiosity to examine and handle the things around them and so appreciate form and learn to fashion materials. The appreciation of beauty and the use of the hands and voice to give expression to the emotions so aroused probably emerged as the result of experience gained in cultivating visual and acoustic discrimination. Incidentally the ability to learn by experience became immeasurably extended. The importance of this human quality is indicated in Mr. Spearing's statement: 'It is the remembrance of things seen which constitutes the ability to read a picture.'

I have now to turn to the examination of man's earliest artistic achievements at present available for study, and attempt to discover how the powers of skilled manipulation found expression.

It must not be forgotten that the human family has been in existence for a vast space of time—hundreds of thousands or possibly even millions of years—but no certain evidence of man's handiwork is known that is older than a few thousand years. Apart from the crude chipping of implements nothing is known of any artistic pursuits of mankind until the appearance of *Homo sapiens*, which coincides with the blossoming of a relatively high stage of culture, in which men displayed their skill as sculptors and painters. For in the cave-dwellings of the people of the so-called Upper Palaeolithic stage of culture, which abound in certain parts of France, Iberia, and other countries of Western Europe, there have been found carvings in ivory and bone, as well as painting and sculpture. The

carvings are usually found associated with burials, while the paintings are on the walls and ceilings of the dark recesses of caves. This, the first manifestation of man's powers as a craftsman, is thus relatively late in the history of the human family; and modern research tends to place it perhaps not more than a few thousands of years ago. Hence we can safely assume that there is no innate tendency in mankind to create works of art. The artistic activities of mankind are, like so many other activities, strictly determined, and do not respond to any universal innate tendency, such as is found associated with sex. We must give up the old habit of ascribing each form of human activity to an 'instinct' and set to work to determine in each case the exact circumstances in which any form of human activity occurs. In his excellent treatise *The Childhood of Art*, Mr. H. G. Spearing says 'each manifestation of art has its special cause or set of causes' (p. 98). He goes on to say that the sculptures of the palaeolithic artists 'were no triflings of an idle hour to while away the time between gross feedings and long weary hunts. They were the result of careful study and of patient preparation' (p. 44).

The chief aim of the present examination of the earliest manifestations of art is to discover the set of causes that gave birth to art. Mr. Spearing has cleared the ground for these inquiries with such judgement and insight that I make no apology for accepting some of his conclusions and referring my readers to his treatise for the evidence in their justification.

Mr. Spearing himself would be the last to deny his great indebtedness to the writings of M. Salomon Reinach. But I have quoted from the former more freely than from the writings of the distinguished French savant because Mr. Spearing has dealt more particularly with aspects of this inquiry which consideration of space prevents me from discussing here.

More than fifty years ago the brilliant French archaeologist Ed. Piette claimed that the creation of pictorial art involved a great effort of genius. Representing solid objects by lines on a flat surface is not an idea that would naturally come first into the artist's head. The art of sculpture led to bas-relief, and that involved the making of incised lines. Hence he learned to draw. Although these views have been often criticized in the light of the numerous discoveries that have been made since 1873, when Piette made these statements (*Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, 18 April), I think that careful study tends to corroborate them. At any rate they provide an argument well worth discussing.

The earliest handiwork of man consists of implements of stone. Whether or not we accept as genuine artefacts the objects called eoliths is not material in this discussion. For many rough implements comparable to eoliths are still being made to-day by aboriginal Australians and other peoples of lowly culture that illustrate my point equally well. Man's earliest efforts to model an object, whether it be a flint implement or an amulet, were inspired by the finding of a piece of appropriate material roughly approximating to the form that was likely to be of some use. In other words he realized that by some slight chipping he could shape the natural object into a weapon or an amulet. Sculpture was probably the earliest art: and it is safe to say that it was not inspired primarily by aesthetic feeling. Men shaped flint to make knives, scrapers, or axes for purely utilitarian purposes; and many millennia elapsed before these implements were given a form to arouse an interest in their symmetry or beauty and appeal to the workman's aesthetic appreciation. So in the making of amulets, which in all probability was not attempted until a certain skill in modelling tools had been attained, men first used natural objects such as cowries and teeth for their supposed virtues respectively in conferring life or

protecting against the danger to life. But when the demand for such objects began to exceed the supply—or alternatively the ideas associated with such an amulet as the cowrie were extended—men sought for natural objects that simulated the original talismans, such as other shells or shell-like stones, and tinkered with them to enhance the likeness to the original model. Hence in time man acquired the skill to shape stone and clay into any form he wished. At an early stage he seems to have used such abilities for modelling figures of women to make amulets potent to confer life upon human beings. As the actual mother confers life when she gives birth to a child she seems to have been regarded essentially as a life-giver. Primitive man seems to have assumed that there was some life-conferring power inherent in the mere form of a woman: so that if he made a figurine exaggerating all her distinctively maternal attributes he would have an amulet potent to add to the wearer's vitality—in other words to protect him against the risks of senility or death. Hence the grotesque representations of fat women which are the earliest efforts of mankind to reproduce the human form. It must not be supposed, however, that these figurines represent early man's idea of beauty. The amulets were made for a practical purpose and not to give expression to aesthetic feelings. The aim was to reproduce the female form in such a way that all the characters associated with the functions of reproduction were intensified even to the stage of gross exaggeration.

The cowrie shell was adopted as an amulet in Upper Palaeolithic times solely because it was supposed to simulate the organ of birth and was therefore supposed to be life-giving, to represent the very essence of the maternal function of life-giving. Subsequently the two expressions of the same idea—the symbolism of the fat mother and of the cowrie shell—were secondarily blended; and the maker of amulets then modelled those grotesque figurines, erro-

neously called 'steatopygous', in which the attempt was made to convert the cowrie-form into the likeness of a woman, the imitation of the shell providing the body and thighs, to which a diminutive head, arms, and the lower parts of legs were added—but so crudely modelled and on so diminutive a scale as not to detract from the obtrusive purpose of the amulet, to combine the life-giving symbolism of the cowrie and the form of the Great Mother in a single object. I need not go more fully into the discussion of these remarkable figurines beyond once more emphasizing the fact that they clearly were not intended, as so many archaeologists pretend, as representations of the condition known as steatopygy which is distinctive of Bushmen and Hottentot women.

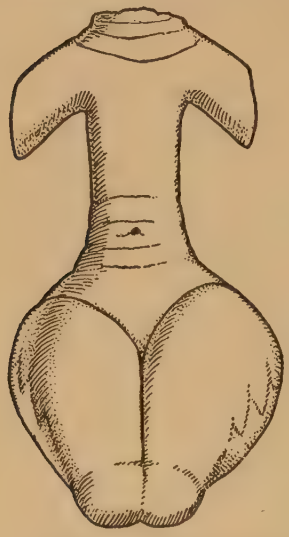

Figure 3. An ancient figurine from Nubia to suggest that the monstrous form of the body is due to the fact that it is a model of a cowrie shell to which a crude addition has been made to represent the upper part of a woman's body.

I have made so lengthy a reference to these amulets to call attention to an important consideration. Their inadequacy as portraits of women cannot be attributed so much to incompetence as to the fact that the artists were modelling symbols to express a definite magical purpose and not simply trying to portray the human form. This principle must never be forgotten in attempting to understand primitive art. It was inspired by a practical purpose, and at first aesthetic considerations played no part in its inception.

Referring to the drawings of the cave men Mr. Spearing says:

I think we may at once dismiss as untenable the idea that they were merely meaningless diversions, helping to pass away the unoccupied hours of a race of nomadic hunters. . . . Such an investigation will be necessary as well as interesting to those who believe that art impulses are not independent manifestations, but can be correlated with other forms of mental and spiritual activity (p. 87).

For, as Salomon Reinach has insisted, the earliest works of art had a magical significance. In the beginning art and religion were intimately linked together (*Apollo*, p. 8) in somewhat the same way as I have claimed science and religion to be akin in origin (*Evolution of the Dragon*, p. 233).

Mr. Spearing has put the essential issue very clearly in the following sentence:

There are many indications, if not definite proof, that the glyptic arts originated not from the desire for the possession of beautiful or decorative objects, but from a desire for objects which would give their possessor power (p. 118).

This reference to power was based upon the assumption that the men who lived in France and Spain in the Upper Palaeolithic phases of culture painted animals that were hunted for food in the belief that the 'pictures gave their possessors power over the subjects represented' (p. 96). Whether or not this is the true explanation of the ideas that inspired the wonderfully lifelike pictures and models found in the French caves the examination of the wider field of early man's behaviour certainly demonstrates that the earliest art was prompted by the desire to safeguard life, not merely by promoting an abundant supply of food but also by averting dangers that threatened to terminate man's existence in other ways. The use of shells as amulets, the symbolism of blood-offerings, the use of red ochre in burial ceremonies, the mutilation of hands, all point to the same conclusion. I need not discuss this

matter in further detail here, because I have already done so in *The Evolution of the Dragon* (more especially in the third chapter). But I want to emphasize the conclusion, which many previous writers have suggested, that man's first essays in artistic expression were not prompted by a feeling for beauty or the need for self-expression so much as by the essentially practical purpose of discovering some device, whether we call it magical or not does not matter, whereby life and existence might be safeguarded. Such efforts provided the circumstances which promoted the cultivation of aesthetic appreciation. The making of life-like representations of animals and other natural objects created the opportunities for the more intense study of form and colour and the means of giving expression to beauties and harmonies perhaps not consciously realized until the difficulties of reproducing them were overcome. Successful accomplishment brought a feeling of satisfaction to the artist and an intenser interest in the technique of his craft.

The same story can be read in every expression of primitive man's activities. Take for example the invention of jewellery. The wearing of red stones, shells, and teeth was certainly prompted at first by the belief in the magical efficacy of these things as elixirs of life, as objects potent to add to the 'vital substance' of the wearer or to protect him against dangers that threatened the loss of this elusive property. When it became difficult to obtain the real things the practice developed of making imitations of their form out of any material that came to hand, stone, wood, clay, or the plastic metal gold. But the introduction of the artist brought in the new factor, that of a craftsman who became proud of his skill: hence in course of time the appreciation of the maker's skill and the beauty of his workmanship were added to the wearer's pride in the amulets, which had now become works of art and valued as much for their aesthetic as for their original

magical qualities. Hence the promotion of magic gave birth to art, just as it created the arbitrary value of gold.[1]

The consideration of any form of man's activity always leads sooner or later to the problem of independent origin. The art of the communities of the Upper Palaeolithic Age sprang from needs that are common to all mankind: yet, as has been insisted, this form of activity did not appear until quite late in the history of the human species. Therefore, while art may rest upon the fundamental needs of mankind, the mere existence of these needs does not suffice to account for it. There evidently must have been, as Piette insisted, a great effort of genius to account for the inception of the cave art of Western Europe. Are we, therefore, to believe that a similar effort of genius was responsible for the early art of Egypt, which bears so much similarity to that of the caves of France and Iberia?

In the opinion of certain students there was a connexion between the art of the Upper Palaeolithic Age in Western Europe and the art of Egypt. This is what M. Capart, the eminent Belgian Egyptologist, says on this matter:

Il est remarquable de constater que dans les cavernes, comme en Égypte dans les tombeaux les plus anciens, les animaux sont représentés d'une manière réellement impeccable. Peut-on croire que la perfection artistique a été deux fois atteinte, indépendamment, et qu'on ait eu, chaque fois, recours à des solutions identiques, pour résoudre certains problèmes des représentations artistiques? Généralement, dans les cavernes, les animaux sont figurés de profil, mais cependant les cornes sont dessinées de face. On peut citer quelques rares exemples d'animaux tournant la tête vers l'arrière. Lisons quelques remarques à ce sujet de l'Abbé Breuil, le sagace commentateur de cet art paléolithique. Il remarque la biche no. 23 de la Pasiega 'à la même attitude rétrospective que celle, de même technique, de Cavalanas. Les représentations rétrospec-

[1] *The Evolution of the Dragon*, p. 221; also Perry, *The Origin of Magic and Religion.*

tives, continue-t-il, sont toujours rares; mais on peut en citer de tous les monuments de l'art paléolithique. . . . Nous rapellerons encore l'analogie très grande dans le procédé figuratif de la ramure des cerfs et des cornes de bœufs, représentées de face dans des conditions assez spéciales, qui réunit ces images à celles des peintures rupestres de l'Espagne orientale et de quelques dessins de la grotte du Portel. . . . Nous insistons d'autant plus volontiers sur ces caractères analogiques que nous y trouvons une confirmation des relations qui ont dû exister entre ces diverses provinces artistiques.' [1]

He then goes on to draw a comparison with early Egyptian art, and argues as follows:

Mais pourquoi raisonnerait-on d'une autre manière, lorsqu'on rencontre, dans les plus vieux tombeaux décorés de l'Égypte pharaonique des procédés de représentation absolument identiques? Veut-on parler de coïncidences? Mais n'est-il pas étrange que l'on assigne aux représentations paléolithiques, exactement le même rôle magique et religieux que l'on a reconnu aux représentations égyptiennes? Si nous les voyons disparaître à l'époque néolithique, c'est que les populations nouvelles n'avaient plus les mêmes croyances, ni les mêmes rites. En Égypte, au contraire, jusqu'à la fin de la civilisation pharaonique, ces mêmes représentations doivent jouer, au bénéfice du mort, un rôle identique. Le développement des arts graphiques avait évidemment permis de multiplier les thèmes, mais les scènes de chasse et de pêche, d'élève de bétail, occupent toujours une place importante; et lorsque les sculpteurs égyptiens, décorant, par exemple, le temple d'Abou Gorab, représentaient la saillie du bétail, il faisaient la même chose que les paléolithiques de la grotte du Tuc d'Audoubert modelant les deux fameux bisons.

Évidemment, la thèse que suppose une telle explication peut paraître très adventureuse. Mais nous ne pouvons cependant négliger les faits. Si des indications, empruntées successivement à l'anthropologie, à l'archéologie préhis-

[1] Quoting from Breuil, Obermayer, and Alcade de Rio, *La Pasiega a Puente-Viesgo*, Monaco, 1913, p. 52.

torique, à l'étude comparée des rites et des conventions artistiques, nous amènent à deviner une connexion, très lointaine, entre l'Égypte primitive et les populations paléolithiques du sud-ouest de l'Europe, pourquoi se refuserait-on à chercher de ce côté l'explication du grand problème de la transmission de la civilisation ? [1]

This is a remarkable and courageous attempt to bridge the gulf between the art of the Upper Palaeolithic period in Europe and that of Egypt. In these days of attempts to belittle the contributions of Egypt to civilization, to ascribe the beginnings of so many items of culture to Syria,[2] to Sumer, to anywhere but the country where they obviously originated, it is refreshing to find competent Egyptologists seeing the connexions between Egypt and the world outside. M. Capart is clear-headed enough to see that it is far easier to believe in the propagation of an idea, or of a technique, than to believe in its independent origin in two places. In his contentions he finds support from other quarters. Writing in 1926,[3] Professor James H. Breasted, reviewing the recent discoveries in Mesopotamia and Syria, claimed that ' it is now a finally established fact that civilization first arose in Egypt, followed a few centuries later by Babylonia '. Another authority is Sophus Müller, the learned director of the National Museum of Copenhagen. He says[4] that there is an evident connexion between Europe in the days of the cave art and predynastic Egypt, and thus entirely agrees with M. Capart.

M. Jacques de Morgan protests against Sophus Müller's claim ' that we should recognize in our Quaternary western

[1] Capart, ' La Place de l'Égypte dans l'histoire de la Civilisation ', *Bull. Soc. d'Anthropologie de Bruxelles*, xxxvi. 188–214.

[2] See for instance H. R. Hall, article ' Archaeology ', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Supp. Volumes, 1922.

[3] Breasted, *The Conquest of Civilization*, New York, 1926.

[4] *L'Europe Préhistorique*, Paris, p. 8.

art a gleam projected by the radiance of Egyptian prepharaonic civilization' on the ground that 'a supposition of this kind implies a chronological agreement for which we have no authority' (*Prehistoric Man*, p. 192).

But de Morgan seems to lose all sense of perspective when, as the reason for his objection to Müller's suggestion, he makes the statement that 'it would seem quite unnecessary to torture chronology in order to link up our European civilizations with such distant centres, for there is no reason whatever why aesthetic feeling should not have come to birth in our part of the world' (p. 192). But the elucidation of the history of civilization will not be made by idle speculations as to why certain things might not have happened, so much as by the synthesis of the available evidence as to what actually did happen. It is not necessary to torture chronology—but rather to accept the patent evidence now in our possession—to show that there was actually an overlap of many centuries (and perhaps even of more than one millennium) of Egyptian achievement before 2000 B.C. and the so-called Upper Palaeolithic phases of culture in Western Europe. For it is clear that the essential elements of the culture called Neolithic were derived from Egypt long *after* the invention of copper-working, and probably after the close of the Pyramid Age. Writing in 1913 Mr. Spearing says: 'Finds of small pieces of copper in neolithic houses and graves have now become so frequent that some archaeologists are almost beginning to doubt if there ever was a neolithic age—an age of polished stone-users absolutely ignorant of any metal' (p. 147). Hence his other remark, made hypothetically, is not so 'extremely unlikely' as he imagines. I refer to his phrase: 'the palaeolithic civilization of Europe might then be considered as being of later date than the predynastic [Egyptian]' (p. 146).

Mr. Spearing has referred to the absence of life-size sculptures of the human form in palaeolithic deposits

(p. 42), although he is encouraged by Dr. Lalanne's discovery (1910) of the human reliefs at Laussel (*L'Anthropologie*, January 1912) in the belief that such statuary may be found. Yet with the possible exceptions of the Min statues (supposed to be of protodynastic date) found at Koptos in Egypt during the season 1893–4 no life-size human statues are known until the time of the Pyramid Age. At Saqqara a life-size statue of Zoser has been found in position in the room built against the north side of the Step Pyramid. Mr. Cecil Firth says this is the oldest royal statue of life size yet found—its only competitor being a statuette of Khasekhemni of the second dynasty. In fact, for centuries before life-sized statues were made sculptors had shown that their absence was not due to any lack of the ability to model the human figure. Such life-size portraits were not made, simply because the circumstances had not yet arisen to prompt sculptors to make statues of such proportions. The incentive to do so arose, as I have already explained elsewhere (*The Evolution of the Dragon*, chap. i), out of the demand for the preservation of the form of the living body as an essential condition for the attainment of survival after death. The making of a 'living image' was considered to be tantamount to the prolongation of existence and of life. But such beliefs were not the invention of a moment. They only emerged after centuries of striving to avert the fate of annihilation at death.

The practice of mummifying the dead was invented in Egypt in the belief that the preservation of the body implied the prolongation of existence. It was considered necessary not merely to render the body incorruptible but also to maintain its outward form and lifelike appearance. The dead man's individuality and appearance as he was when alive were believed to endure if he could be converted into a durable statue to preserve his likeness.

When the embalmers realized their inability to attain

the latter aim—as early as the second dynasty—they adopted the device of swathing the mummified body in bandages and so building it up into the likeness of the individual, the features being indicated by paint upon the wrappings. Then they adopted the procedure of applying resinous paste, plaster, or mud to the face of the wrapped mummy and moulding these plastic materials to represent the dead man's features.

After many varied experiments of this kind the conviction seems to have been impressed upon the embalmer of the inadequacy of all such procedures to attain the desired result, that is, of converting either the mummy itself or the wrappings that swathed it into a satisfactory likeness of the deceased. Hence sculptors were employed to make, altogether apart from the body, life-size portrait statues in stone or wood to preserve the living image. For when the statue (either of the head alone or of the whole body) was modelled, it was painted and artificial eyes were inserted so as to make the statue not only an accurate portrait but also to give it a living appearance. It was believed to preserve not merely the dead man's portrait but to ensure the prolongation of his existence as an animate being.

This practical purpose was the primary (and in fact sole) aim of the earliest makers of life-size portrait statues. It was not an art, but merely a craft and a ritual—a meticulously exact copying of the traits of a living person with the essentially religious object of conferring, if not immortality, at any rate a prolongation of existence after death.

Thus the early Greek writers attributed the invention of sculpture to Daedalus, asserting that he made his statues so lifelike that they could even see and speak (Spearing, p. 399).

In this Greek tradition survives a faithful account of the real motives that inspired the original inventors of por-

trait statuary in Egypt. The aim of the sculptor was to make a model that was so lifelike as to make the individual continue living, not merely in the symbolic sense that we attach to the words 'a living image', but in their literal and actual sense. At first the feeling for beauty does not seem to have entered into the sculptor's motives. For he did not hesitate to disfigure the most beautiful materials, marble, alabaster, diorite, or wood, by painting them to give the lifelike colours to the model. But in spite of these handicaps some of the sculptors of the Pyramid Age were such superb craftsmen and so intent upon their simple aim of truthful workmanship that they did achieve work of real artistic merit.

In the pursuit of this essentially practical aim of making images that would live the craftsman must soon have come to realize what modern writers call the 'magic' of his skill, and like Pygmalion have fallen under the spell of the beauty he had created. Then he became something more than a mere craftsman: the realization of the aesthetic qualities of the Galatea fashioned by his own hands transformed him into an artist, the man who strives to express his sympathies and feeling for beauty with chisel and brush.

I have been trying to demonstrate that art was created, so to speak, unintentionally: it was not primarily invented as an expression of man's feeling for beauty but to serve certain definite practical purposes. But out of the experience gained in such practices the opportunities immediately arose for the display of the aesthetic qualities that are innate in man. To express the matter in another way: mankind did not appreciate the beauties of the world in which he lived or his own aptitude for the creation of beautiful things until certain events forced him to study them and endeavour to represent them. Out of such striving art was born.

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III

PREHISTORIC ART

By Dina Portway Dobson

It is difficult to find an adequate definition of Art, but, amongst other things, it is the expression of an emotion. This expression in its turn gives rise to emotion in the people perceiving the effort. But the two emotions may not be the same. An inefficient musician with a flute is possibly obeying the call of his deepest sentiments when he expresses himself musically, and yet he appeals to quite other profundities in his audience; while the artistic impulse that prompts a small child to draw with coal on a white wall-paper is quite foreign to that roused in the breast of any but the most modern of parents: on the other hand, the organist who carries his hearers almost to Heaven's Gate may be thinking of nothing more religious than his supper. The whole matter is essentially personal and can only be studied subjectively, and artistic excellence is therefore more difficult to estimate than any other quality, for there are no absolute standards by which it can be measured. So far back as our knowledge of mankind goes we find this fluctuation, not only in artistic achievement, but also in aesthetic standard. Take, as a universally applicable example, the variations of opinion that have existed regarding the more desirable characteristics of female beauty. An English fashion-plate of to-day shows a figure of board-like slimness, but the bulk of mankind has liked his ladies to be fat in reality as well as magically. We read in the fascinating volume of Messrs. Spencer and Gillen on the Australian aborigines of a set of damsels who went to the river to bathe, and, turning upon one of their number, slew and devoured her. This act was performed from no mean motive of personal

dislike or animosity, nor from carnal greed, but was due to the fact that she was possessed, to no ordinary degree, of the beauty of fatness, and this beauty her companions desired to incorporate in themselves, so that they too might abound. Ladies of the harem, and therefore presumably their husbands, have had and possibly still have, where Western ideals have not corrupted them, the same standard, and Palaeolithic man certainly conceived it even if he did not admire it. Different examples of this fluctuation in aesthetic standard can be found on every hand—recently, with reference to furnishing and house decoration. We must therefore content ourselves with describing rather than valuing Palaeolithic art: that is to say, we can only judge of the emotion it creates in us, we cannot speak of the emotion which gave it birth. The two may well be very different. This is likely to be the case more particularly when the mentality and environment of the artist are as remote from our own as were those of prehistoric man.

Emotion that finds an outlet in art has one characteristic in common with other emotions and their expression; it becomes a habit. Therefore the artistic expression itself becomes to some degree stereotyped, and the art grows into a craft. What was once spontaneous is now achieved deliberately, and the specialists tell us that even Palaeolithic man had his schools of drawing and carving. This tendency to conventionalization—for that is what it may become—is seen, perhaps, more clearly in primitive than in any later art. This illustrates one of the chief advantages of the study of these early efforts of man to create beauty. In every aspect of life in which we know him he shows us things in their simplest forms. Implements, ceramics, buildings, religion, each spring from an undifferentiated original, so that we can study them in their essence without the distraction of specialization and embellishment. The earliest weapon-tool has a point and a handle; the earliest

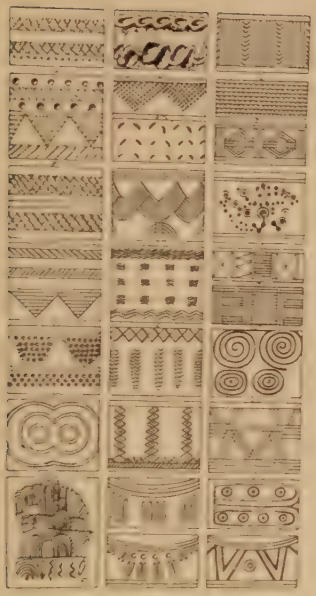
pot is a bowl, footless and plain; the earliest stone building, two uprights and a third stone as a roof; the earliest interment, a putting to rest with a few treasures.

There remains one further point to emphasize before proceeding to Upper Palaeolithic art, and that is the fact that artistic excellence may be due to a desire to produce beauty, or to an effort to acquire the most complete utility. A sailing ship, driving before the wind with all her sails set, is an example of a thing of beauty produced solely with a view to quite other attributes. Thus certain of the earliest known works of man possess an artistic excellence of which their creator was doubtless unaware. The large axes of the Chellean or River Drift men have a wonderful symmetry both of outline and surface finish, and some even a wavy edge that is very satisfying, while the ripple-flaking on the best pre-dynastic flint knives from Egypt has a high artistic excellence. We must probably reckon frequently with this utility art in dealing with the products of our remote forebears.

Except for worked flints and a few worked bones there are no artefacts left to us by early man until the Upper Palaeolithic period is reached. The Quaternary or Cave Art belongs to the final phases of the epoch divided into the Aurignacian, Solutrean, and Magdalenian periods, from the respective type-stations. The climate at this period was cold and wet, since the final glaciation of Western Europe was passing away; but temperate conditions were not yet established, and the scenery was of the Tundra type. For the sake of shelter man lived in caves or rock shelters, at any rate for part of the year, and by occupation he was a hunter. This fact is of prime importance, for it was the cause of his art. From analogy with other races living, or recently extinct, who occupied a similar environment, or an environment dissimilar but making similar demands upon man, it seems fairly certain that sympathetic magic was at the bottom of most of the cave

drawings. Such magic decrees that the image of a being possesses such affinity with its original that an injury to one causes a corresponding injury to the other. Thus a drawing of a mammoth with an arrow through its heart would ensure the arrow of the hunter also finding its mark. But even if the earliest sculpture and drawing had this cause, the habit of artistic expression evidently grew on the hunters, so that the ordinary tools and weapons of daily use were ornamented generally with naturalistic representations of animals but sometimes with geometrical and conventionalized patterns. Leisure is essential for artistic work, and this is exactly what a hunter's life provides. Many of the animals of the period, such as mammoth and bison or even horse and reindeer, were of a considerable size, and their capture must have provided food for the community for some time. Then the braves could set to work to make bows and arrows and spears, shape flints for an infinity of uses, carve amulets, dagger-handles, and shaft-straighteners, while the medicine man crept into the cave with his burin or graver, his bone palette of ochres, fats, and lamp-black, and his lamp to prepare the next big magic.

The actual cave art itself has been divided into five artistic phases by its exponent Mr. Burkitt, and a marked rise and decline in excellence can be traced. It can be further classified under the headings of engravings and paintings. The engravings of the Aurignacian Age showed figures incised generally in silhouette, with only two legs visible, but with the horns full-face and an almond-shaped eye; but a marked step forward was made in the Lower Magdalenian epoch. This implies a considerable interval of time, for the Solutrean folk came between the Aurignacians and Magdalenians, but though extraordinarily skilful in flint-work they do not seem to have given much attention to art proper. In Magdalenian times, then, there was a general improvement both in the verisimilitude of the whole figures



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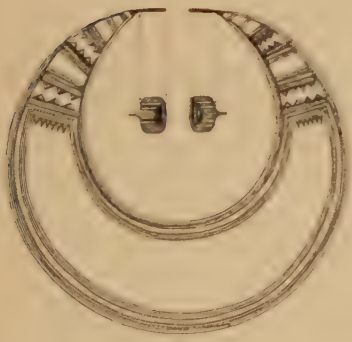

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4

PREHISTORIC ART

1. Designs of Neolithic and Bronze Periods
2. Early British enamels
3. Gold lunette, Carnarvonshire
4. Chalice of Mycenian epoch, Rhodes

Nos. 2 and 3 from the British Museum Guides to the Bronze and Early Iron Ages, by permission

and in the attention to detail. The horns were represented in profile as well as the legs, of which four might now appear. Perhaps the best work in engraving belonged to the Middle Magdalenian period, with strikingly lifelike figures executed with a wealth of accurate detail—which degenerated markedly in the Upper Magdalenian, while no engravings on walls at all were found in the transition period between Palaeolithic and Neolithic times.

The earliest paintings, again following Mr. Burkitt, were line-dotted tracings, followed by silhouette monochrome paintings of animals, generally only showing two legs. By Magdalenian times stump drawing had begun, and real modelling of the body and limbs was apparent. Later, engraving and painting were sometimes combined, but though the colour filled the outline the whole effect was apt to be flat, while in the Upper Magdalenian polychrome effects were attained and finally the outline was generally executed in black and the body shaded in tones between black and red. There was a tendency to conventionalization and less appearance of life. In the transition stage no animals appeared—only a few lines and dots. With the passing of cave conditions cave art had come to an end.

To the ordinary observer the most remarkable feature of all this painting is the wonderful fidelity to nature displayed. The drawings are meant to represent animals, and to represent them as correctly as possible. The requisite knowledge for this was at the disposal of the artist. None can know animals so well as a hunter, for this knowledge means life or death to him and his dependants. Not only must he make a minute study of their habits, but he may have to spend hours observing their every movement, until chance and his own immobility brings them within range. Their anatomy also was well known to these men, who were also butchers and tanners, and working with a flint knife and no hatchet it would be necessary to dismember the limbs properly. One delight-

ful drawing represents a feast. A bison's head is shown, then his backbone, picked bare of meat, while the satisfied hunters stand on either hand. The animals represented are various—mammoth, bison, many species of deer, bear, wolf, horse, a few felines, a few fish, serpents, and birds, some charming seals, and a very few plants. A certain number of designs known as tectiforms are said to represent tents, but the overwhelming majority of the sketches are zoological. The same may be said for the carving, which is no less wonderful, ranging from work in high or low relief down to tiny figures in ivory done in the round. Objects of everyday use, such as harpoon-throwers, arrow-straighteners, and dagger-handles, are sometimes adorned with figures of animals slightly conventionalized or posed so as to fit on to the material. Ivory carving has always imposed its own limitations, and the same thing applies to other bone carving. These limitations were clearly recognized by the early craftsmen, who adapted their work to them admirably. A similar sense of adaptation is shown in many of the cave engravings, where the natural inequalities in the rock-face, or even ribs of stalactite, have been utilized and form part of the actual picture. It is much more difficult to find a really flat surface of rock in a cave than any one would expect who had not sought it, and this scarcity of canvases was the cause of the habit early man had of leaving us palimpsests, a series of superimposed drawings. Useful as this may be for chronological purposes, it does not improve the pictures as works of art, but seems to show without doubt that the purpose of the artist was not mural decoration but an adequate medium for the creation of his special totem-mark, or whatever his drawing was. These features and also the naturally inadequate lighting underground make it difficult to discern the drawings in the caves themselves, so that reproductions, which omit the surface inequalities and fissures and only present the actual outline, give a poor impression of the real thing. Also the caves

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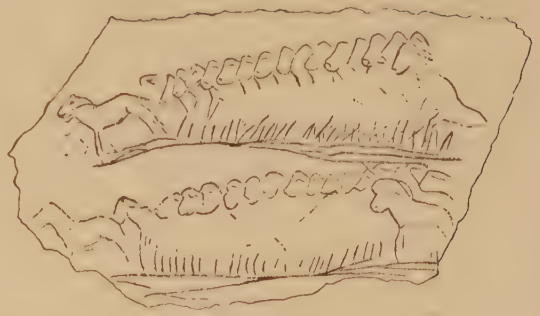

4

CAVE DRAWINGS

1. 3. Altamira

2. S. Marcel

4. Chaffaud

where the drawings are found are mostly narrow passages, and the drawings are often placed low—a feature sometimes shared by the roof—so that it is impossible to imagine that any one could have executed them for pleasure.

From the point of view of actual skill perhaps two of the most interesting sketches are of animals charging. One of horses shows the first and last beast represented entire, in profile, but all those intervening are indicated by a series of profile, overlapping heads and a frieze of legs. Composition of the pictures is generally lacking, though a procession is often found in bone engraving, and deer or reindeer sometimes seem to be grazing together or communicating with each other, while in one picture of reindeer crossing a river the salmon seem to be biting at their legs. Perhaps the most spirited picture of all shows two male reindeer fighting. They have been butting each other, and one has upset his adversary, who lies in an extraordinarily complicated and crumpled condition. Animals are sometimes represented as looking over their shoulders backwards, not an easy way in which to depict them. In one picture a slight landscape is shown, just a suggestion of a pond and grass beside it.

For sheer beauty the painted deer and bison stand out above the rest. With the simple colours at his disposal the artist has worked so well that the creatures seem to be instinct with life. Not only are they portrayed correctly, but they really look like animals, not like pictures of animals or like a clever but untrained artist's painting. The attitudes, ruminant or active, as in the case of the famous charging bison, are always characteristic, and it is impossible to imagine that in this special and limited direction these productions can ever be excelled. They are the culminating work of a really artistic people, and the fruit of long experiment and much experience. Almost as much might be said of the best period of modelling. The two bison made in clay and found in the innermost

recesses of the Tuc d'Audobert, Ariège, are untamed and yet evidently friendly beasts, the female following the male on their trek, and the whole shaped from clay which has cracked as it dried.

Representations of human beings are naturally of special interest, and occur in various places. The fat ladies have been dealt with already; there are other ladies not fat, and various figures of men, all nude apparently save for a kind of Red-Indian head-dress of feathers and fringes about their knees, like the tassels worn on their stockings by the more sartorially enterprising of our young men to-day. They are generally engaged in active occupations, where fur clothes would have been a hindrance. They use bows and arrows, they fight and they dance, and one descends a cliff on a rude ladder to rob a bee's nest. One of the most charming of the ivories is a tiny thing from Brassempuy in the Landes. It consists of a female head, and is only $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, including a good allowance of neck. The face is flat, with high cheek-bones and fairly full cheeks and a pointed chin. The eyes appear to have been set far apart; the nose is rather long but flattish. The hair is long, and grows low on the forehead and descends on both sides of the face. It is represented by vertical crossed by horizontal lines. She is known as the 'Statuette à la Capuche'. Another of the Brassempuy figurines is of a female torso and legs, undraped save for a belt, and of completely natural slim proportions. Apart from their artistic value, which is not great, the ladies from Cogul, Catalonia, are of great interest because they are clothed. They are apparently engaged in dancing round a male figure, and they wear—shades of Victorian ladies note it well—shaped skirts clinging close to their slender waists and descending rather tightly to end in points at either side well below their knees. There is little suggestion of clothes above the waist, save for puffs and fringes on one or two arms at the elbow. The pendulous breasts are very

evident, and the hair flows down their backs. Though no connexion is hinted at, yet the style is bound to recall that of Crete, where the statuettes, for instance of the beautiful snake goddess, also show shaped and trimmed skirts, slim waists, and bare bosoms. The horned and tailed sorcerer from the cave of Trois Frères in the Ariège is also interesting magically rather than artistically.

The conventional patterns of this age are not very numerous, but they are important, for they do not admit of the same explanation as the animal drawings. The very conventionalized human figure from Prêdmost suggests, in the use made in producing it of semicircles, the designs of the Megalithic period, and in a bone pendant from St. Marcel (Indre) we have figured already the concentric circle, by some people said to be a degeneration of the spiral. It could quite well have been discovered, however, by the use of the fire-making drill. The spiral itself has been found incised on reindeer horn from the Basses Pyrénées, and also a bone ornamented with dots and crosses and one with a shaded chevron from Marsoulas and St. Marcel respectively. After all, given a graving tool and a spare piece of bone, some design was as likely to follow as is the decoration of blotting paper by people holding pens to-day during a meeting.

There are three sets of primitive peoples not yet exterminated or completely civilized to whom it is possible to look for parallels to cave art and the 'art mobilier' of the Palaeolithic period. The most often quoted are the South African Bushmen, now much reduced in numbers, but formerly leading a nomadic and hunting existence over the greater part of South Africa. They engraved both animals and human figures on rocks and sometimes painted them as well, and the same thing was done to a lesser extent by the Australian aborigines, while the Eskimo make little drawings on ivory as a method of picture writing. These little pictures are more sophisti-

cated than those of Palaeolithic man, for they tell a connected story, and so bear a message or send an appeal, but when seen side by side with the earlier work no one can help feeling the resemblance, especially to some of the work from Southern Spain. There is the same simplicity in dealing with the human figure, the same vigorous movement, and sufficient accuracy in depicting animals correctly for the species of whale represented to be determined. The recurrence of reindeer, and reindeer being attacked with bow and arrow, in itself takes us back to Palaeolithic times, and the possibility has been mooted that the Eskimo do represent the remnants of the cave people who migrated north with the reindeer to escape the growing warmth of the climate.

The Palaeolithic period was followed by a time of transition, as uncomfortable, probably, as transitional times usually are. For a variety of geographical reasons man was too deeply concerned with the business of keeping alive to have leisure for much else, and the only painting he produced was a blotching of signs in red or black on pebbles. The meaning of these signs is at present unknown, but they have no artistic excellence. To this period, however, and to the early Neolithic times, belongs the inception of the great inventions that were to make the world as we know it possible. They were the domestication of animals, building of dwellings, navigation, husbandry, pottery making, and weaving. This is not the place to consider the results of these changes, which more or less coincided with the establishment of our modern climate and land boundaries, but the upshot was that man became a farmer. He was no longer a wanderer, he was *adscriptus glebae*—with the fierce sense of personal property that only personal labour can give.

It is doubtful if a purely agricultural community—at any rate unless the institution of slavery was well developed—has ever produced great works of art. Only

those who have to some extent shared it can realize the insistent demands made on folk by the life of husbandry. The nomadic herdsman has leisure while his cattle graze, but the earth clamours for ceaseless attention. As the days lengthen so do her demands increase, and with the waning of the year and of human energy there still remains enough to do to fill the short daylight. It is true that there are the long winter evenings, but the dwelling of Neolithic man was small and his light poor, so that he could do little more than whittle at a stick.

Pottery, because of its comparative indestructibility, has been taken as the object most useful for determining the age of settlements since its invention. Three factors concerning it have to be dealt with: the composition of the paste, the shape of the vessel, and the ornament. In the beginning the potter's wheel was not known—vessels were made by hand and were of a simple form, with rounded bottom and sometimes with small handles. Before the end of the Neolithic period really fine pots were being produced not only in Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean but also Bosnia, Bohemia, Spain, France, and other parts of Europe. The question of paste is a technical one, and it must suffice here to say that while it improved for the best work a very coarse material was long used for the everyday specimens, the kitchen ware of the poor. The shapes showed great variety, and many kinds of vessels were produced—jugs, bowls, dishes, pots—but the design is of the greatest interest because it is always conventional. There seem to be only a few patterns known to human craftsmen, and we get them produced with endless variation by the Neolithic potters. They used spirals, singly and joined, circles and concentric circles, bands and vertical lines, and the chevron with its twin the saltire. Sometimes very fine results were produced, sometimes poor things, but hardly ever was there a hint of the drawing of anything from nature—with the

exception of the serpents on a few of the Breton megaliths, some animal-formed vases farther east, and ships with their crews on the predynastic pots from Egypt. So far as his pottery went man had become an efficient craftsman, with a rather barbaric taste for heavy decoration. Human figures in clay were made by some people, but were interesting rather than beautiful.

But this was still the Stone Age, and the name was well-deserved, for the work in stone was its most characteristic product. The struck flint with its pressed-out edge was no longer the typical implement, but the polished axe, made from different varieties of hard stone and given a wonderful polish. In the East great skill was attained in the slow and difficult art of stone polishing, and the best craftsmen could produce vases, beads, and bracelets all made of stone. Flint chipping also reached great perfection.

The artistic impulse of the age, however, is shown in bigger things than these. Whether metal was known or not is of little consequence in this connexion; for our purpose this was the age of megalithic building.

When man dwelt in caves he probably disposed of such of his dead as merited ceremonial burial in the family home; then he took to dwelling elsewhere, but still clung to the old burial-place, and when a cave was not available he created one by putting huge stones together on the ground. Such may have been the origin of the bigger buildings of the time, but the use of stone to make huts where the ground was too rocky for excavation seems to have been discovered early, and with it two alternative methods of roofing—by means of a flat stone laid across the uprights, or by corbelling. The latter is shown in its most perfect form in the beehive tombs of Mycenae, while the former method can be seen matchlessly at Stonehenge. Whatever was the religion that produced the great temples of this period there can be no doubt of the dignity and splendour

of the buildings themselves. Avebury with its tremendous ditch and rampart and circle of enormous stones is only surpassed by the lonely dignity of Stonehenge, too well known to need description, or the wonders of the apse-like halls, one opening from the other, of the temples of Mnaidra and Hal Tarxien in Malta. All these suggest common labour on a big scale, either of slaves or a community working together for a common cause. Palaeolithic society was isolated—a hunting community must be small—and the art was individualistic. Neolithic man lived in larger communities. He had possessions to defend, and he could increase the food-supply as the community increased. Within limits additions to the clan were welcomed, for the labourer could produce more than he could consume. So the long barrows were enormous, and many made to hold more than one interment; the temples were immense, and must have been intended for throngs of worshippers. The alignments of Carnac even now stretch for over a mile. We can only imagine how the arts of dancing and possibly of music were developed within these shrines, or what rites went on in the stone circles which remain. But we can say that the people who left such monuments were thinking of something besides their daily bread, and that they could express their conception of beauty in a form which we can recognize to-day.

If the foundation of society as we know it was laid in Neolithic times, the beginnings of the upper story, of the refinements and complications, were consolidated with the discovery of metal.

Fortunately this is not the place to discuss the various theories existing as to the place or sequence of this discovery or discoveries, but certainly the first metals to be worked were gold and copper, to be followed soon after by bronze. So useful was bronze that it has given its name to the early metal age. It must be clearly remembered that all the designations of prehistoric periods refer to

phases rather than actual millennia or centuries. Thus the Copper Age in Egypt occurred far earlier than in the West.

While gold and copper could be hammered, bronze was generally cast; and the first moulds were flat, but gave way in time to casting with a double mould, hollow in the middle, and with a plug of clay to make the implement itself hollow, while finally the delicate *cire-perdue* process was invented, leading to a great economy of metal and consequent lightness of the implement, and also to great beauty and delicacy in the finished object.

The Bronze Age is best known to us from the writings of Homer, and can be studied in its greatest perfection from an artistic point of view in the finds at Ur, in Crete, at Mycenae, and in Egypt. The West can produce many things of beauty, but cannot rival those treasure-houses.

To begin with the pottery. The great majority of designs were geometric, the foundations being chiefly the chevron and spiral. These are found in every possible combination, but in the West the chevron was far more common than the spiral, which was more difficult of treatment. In Britain Bronze-Age pottery has been collected from the round barrows, and has many characteristic forms. The beaker, a pot found as an article of grave furniture, was about six to eight inches high. It was hand-made of browny clay, and had the form of a goblet, but with various modifications. There was generally a constriction somewhere about a third from the top, and from there the cup opened out again. Beakers were adorned by stamping the pattern on to the wet clay with a slip of wood or bone or a point. The design consists of bands or chevrons, and the same is true to a large extent of other Bronze-Age vessels, cinerary urns, or food vessels, or the more varied incense cups. All of this pottery is coarse and barbaric but very decorative. The decoration is always geometrical, and shows a well-developed sense of balance.

In the eastern Mediterranean the pottery is of a very

different type, and may have owed the spiral, with which it is lavishly decorated, to Egypt in the first place. In Crete the pottery was polychrome, and some of it so fragile that it has been called 'egg-shell ware'. Some of the ware was of a lustrous black, with designs in white paint, while in Mycenae the ground was usually yellow with designs laid on in other colours, black, red, or white.

The Cretan ware is not characteristic of the rest of the Bronze Age in one respect, for the designs were no longer geometrical: the artist went to nature for his inspiration and produced the most beautiful figures, entirely naturalistic, of flowers, grasses, and fishes. The cuttle-fish was a great favourite and finally had almost a conventional form of his own, while the suckers on his tentacles were used as a kind of bordering, and can be seen on some of the huge oil vessels of the Cretan palace. The whole civilization of Crete reached a sumptuousness probably unsurpassed at any time, and to give the slightest idea of it many chapters would be needed. But in considering the more modest productions of this age in the West it must not be forgotten that, given suitable conditions, objects of the highest artistic excellence could be produced.

Perhaps of all the metal-work of these times existing the gold will always be the most attractive. It seems to have been very plentiful in the early metal ages, for in the burnt city of Hissarlik or Troy Schliemann found almost every object of gold, while great stores have been discovered in Ireland or with an Irish origin. Mr. Woolley has recently unearthed wonderful gold objects at Ur. Gold was easily worked, and its beauty was immediately apparent. It had to be sought for and was never common enough to become of 'no account'.

Of the objects made of solid gold some of the most characteristic are the lunulae or crescents. These were possibly worn on the head, and were generally incised with chevrons and diamonds. They have been found in

most parts of Ireland, in Wales, Cornwall, Scotland, and France. Other gold objects of Bronze-Age time are 'bracelets, amulets, diadems, rings, beads, ear-rings', and boxes; while Yeovil in Somerset can boast of a gold torque made with three flanges twisted, and fastened with heavy turned-back ends. Besides incised gold objects the art of decoration with gold leaf was known, and it was laid on copper with very good effect. Some shields were made in this way, and also some of the so-called sun-disks, supposed to have been connected with sun-worship. These shields and disks were embossed with pellets and frequently ornamented with spirals or concentric circles. One elaborately decorated gold plate formed a peytrel, or shield for a horse. Repoussé was the method used. The Bronze Age was essentially the age of horses, and it is not uncommon to find the horse buried with his master in a barrow. Perhaps the horse of Troy was not without significance as a symbol of this age, for it was also a time of battles. Bronze made far more serviceable weapons than flint, and the possession of good weapons is a temptation to use them. To take Britain alone, the Neolithic farmer with his small stature and gregarious habits was overrun by the marauding bands of early Celts, who followed after the broad-headed Beaker folk.

Though there must have been some intercourse amongst people even in Palaeolithic times, something like regular trade-routes must have been in use in the Bronze Age, and remarkable similarities exist between objects found in British barrows and others at Mycenae, while faience beads from Egypt have been dug up in Britain. Egypt itself decked its damsels in Baltic amber. Beads were more popular than ever, and were made of gold, amber, and jet. Necklaces were planned on an elaborate scale, and consisted of tiers of beads, small and large specimens being combined.

Bronze objects are after all the most characteristic

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THE BRONZE AGE

1. Enamelled shield, from Thames at Battersea
2. Sun-disk, Ireland
3. Back of mirror, Desborough, Northants
4. Bucklers, Thames and Wales

(*From the British Museum Guide to the Bronze Age, by permission*)

legacy of the Bronze Age. In the West the type implement is the so-called celt—an edged tool that could be axe or spade or hoe—and which varied in form and hafting until it was evolved as the socketed celt having a cutting-edge with a cup-like base into which the handle was hafted. The best bronze weapons have a great elegance. The leaf-shaped swords and spear-heads are graceful and clean-cut, while the daggers have highly ornamented handles, some of inlaid work. Scandinavia can produce some of the finest work of this period. The bronze disk from a peat-bog at Langstrup, Denmark, is decorated with concentric circles, each being marked with fine lines, and consisting of spirals joined together. The lurs or trumpets from Denmark are wonderful bits of metal-work. Some are six feet long, made of metal cylinders joined in pieces. The instrument is not straight but curved near the mouth-piece and also at the other end, where it opens out in the form of a flat plate set with huge bosses. All sorts of objects of everyday use are found in bronze, generally much ornamented. A collection of pins shows great variety of design, while the torques or collars are also numerous and varied.

Of the other arts it is never so easy to speak. Music must have existed, unless the trumpets were only used to sound a mustering call. Dancing can surely never have died out: indeed, the native dances of Brittany with the dancers grouped in a circle or processing in twos suggest inevitably the arrangement of the megalithic stones—circles and alignments—and force the observer to wonder whether they were connected. The Celtic tongue was used in the Bronze Age, but only a specialist can tell how far old songs and poems have kept their ancient form and how far been modified. Homer himself has taken on a more modern dress; but in Greece to-day a blind beggar playing on a monochord may produce a melody or a monotony from Bronze-Age times. We cannot tell.

Although meteoric iron was known early in the world's history, at any rate in the East, the everyday use of iron was not common much before 1000 B.C. in the eastern Mediterranean, and hardly reached Britain before 500 B.C. or later. The period which saw the first use of iron on a large scale is known as the Early Iron Age, or in Britain as the late Celtic Age. Its products are, furthermore, divided up into those of the early or Hallstadt type, and of the later or La Tène style. As could be guessed, the British examples belong mostly to the later period.

The Early Iron Age world was essentially a Celtic world. These people, full of vigour, came pouring westward, wielding their iron swords and pushing before them the bronze-armed inhabitants of the different lands. They were a long-headed Aryan people—many of them tall and fair or ruddy, with grey or blue eyes. Wanderers as they were, they may have picked up ideas from many sources—the remains of the art of Crete and the nascent art of Greece; the ideas of the strange Etruscans and of the dwellers on the Danube all may have contributed to make up the typically Celtic whole, the characteristic and quite individual ornament known as the product of late Celtic art.

The Celt was a metal-worker. Just as when bronze was scarce it was kept for cutting-tools and stone was used for other purposes, so now that iron was valuable for weapons many objects of ornamental use were still made of bronze. So that some of the best work of the Early Iron Age is actually executed in the older metal.

In design the Celt was conventional, but though there was a good deal of inferior work executed in which the old chevron appeared, yet the best and most characteristic work shows a complete change. Design is now curvilinear. Straight lines are hardly found at all. Circles and dots still abound, and the spiral has been developed until it hardly resembles its ancestor, the simple spiral. As Mr.

Henderson aptly says: 'At first their lines seem rather cumbrous, but soon a slow enchanting movement begins, like the water movements of young otters gambolling in curves.' The familiar abrupt curve of the dolphin's back, especially as represented in heraldry, gives the idea of some of the *motifs* of this art. Conventional as it all is, there is yet a hint of natural forms in these patterns which was quite absent from Bronze-Age design. Leaves and berries and petalled flowers are somehow suggested though they are never actually represented. Some zoomorphic forms do exist, but they are hardly characteristic.

The ornament on metal objects was achieved in different ways. The wonderful bronze mirrors found, many of them in Britain, have on their backs engraved scrolls with the background hatched in with basket-work. In one case the chevron was used for the border. The magnificent shield found in the Thames in 1857, depicted in the Iron Age guide to the British Museum, has three circular plates riveted to the surface on which are repoussé patterns of a curvilinear nature. A comparison of this shield with one of the Bronze Age will emphasize the difference better than many words.

The art of enamelling was also used at this time, the method known as *champlevé* being employed. The surface to be enamelled was dug out, leaving barriers of the field to separate the various colours the one from the other. The colours were varied, both reds and blues and yellows being present. Enamel was most frequently used for horse trappings, for the horse retained his honourable position in the world. Bridle-bits were often thus adorned, while the flat plates used as harness-mounting gave special opportunities for this art.

Rings and bracelets abound at this time, and so do torques—now quite unlike the Bronze-Age twist. The Wraxall (Somerset) torque is a flat bronze collar, richly decorated with curvilinear patterns. Coral was now used

to ornament certain metal objects, the shield found in Lincolnshire amongst them.

The fibula or safety-pin is perhaps the most typical object of this period, and its changes in form pursue a regular evolution which make it invaluable for fixing the date of other objects found associated with it. It can be studied at leisure in the British Museum guide to this period. Even in the common objects of everyday use the Celt showed his delight in curves. The slave shackles found in a cave at Burrington in Somerset are made of iron, and belonged to a community that was probably not particularly wealthy, but they consist of a beautiful trefoil arrangement for the centre-piece, and with finely wrought attachments to surround the unfortunate captive's ankles.

The pottery tells the same tale. Some of it is coarse, but the better ware is fine and often black. It is ornamented with incised lines, the pattern often hatched in and the design generally curvilinear. Dots are sometimes used as decoration. Good examples of the ware can be seen from the lake villages of Somerset.

It is from these villages that some idea can be gained of the ordinary everyday life of an Early Iron Age community. The huts really formed a crannog; they were built up on artificially formed mounds in the shallow waters of the lake near Glastonbury Tor. The village was joined to the higher and drier ground by means of a raised causeway. The huts were built of wattle and daub, with thatched roofs, and the floors were made of clay. When a new tenant took over the house, or a stringent spring-cleaning was needed, a new floor was laid down over the old one. The inhabitants were husbandmen, and also hunters and fishers. The bun-like products of their cookery have been discovered; and they were efficient workers in wood, as is proved by the way the timbers forming the foundations and uprights of their huts were mortised. The saw, with its turned wooden handle, now preserved at

Glastonbury tells us that the prehistoric age is passing and the age of machine-made products growing near. Indeed, this civilization was to be absorbed by the oncoming Roman with his habit of spreading Imperial art and products broadcast.

In the neighbouring cave of Wookey inhabited by the same folk are found more of their belongings. The numerous weaving combs were ornamented generally in concentric circles or kindred designs. Of the weaving itself we have unhappily no trace, and the spindle whorls were plain, of stone or bone. Bracelets were made of turned stone or of bronze. Finger rings were generally of a snake-form; brooches were of varying size, and of a fine elongated design. The tress of dark, plaited hair found in Wookey with the bones of an old woman shows that the women, at any rate, wore long hair.

The habit of marking the burial place of the dead with a barrow was becoming rare, and urn-fields are hard to find. However, at Aylesford one was discovered in 1866, which gave a good supply of pottery of a special type. The vessels had pedestals and were some of them ornamented with cords. They were of a fine paste and turned on a wheel. Pottery of the same kind has been found in France also, and serves to show the fine designs that the Iron Age people could adapt for the purpose of ceramic adornment.

A summary of the history of Prehistoric Art may now be attempted.

In Palaeolithic times man was an individualist. He was a naturalist by force of circumstances, and when he drew or painted or modelled he did his best to reproduce natural forms. He did not as a rule attempt to portray groups; individuals were what he was interested in, and what mattered to him. His way of drawing on top of other pictures showed that he was only interested in his own work.

With Neolithic times husbandry and communal life left little leisure for artistic work, but when patterns were attempted, as on the pottery, the designs were definitely decorative and nothing else. They did not reproduce anything observed but were a pure effort at design. There was a marked tendency to conventionalize when anything natural had to be produced, as in the case of the human figures found in France, Guernsey, and Malta. The buildings were the result of the work of a large community, and were obviously intended for use also by a large community.

In the Bronze Age the best objects of art were personal in character. Armour, weapons, jewellery, fine pottery, all were made of superfine quality for the use of those who could afford them, of humbler craftsmanship and materials for others. Design was purely conventional in the West, but often naturalistic in the East, where the civilization was more magnificent.

Lastly, the Celt came as a conqueror, picking up ideas as he went and transmuting them into a very definite form of his own, which was present with remarkable uniformity in nearly all types of his work. How those ideas survived the Roman conquest is another tale.

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IV

THE GREEK REVELATION

By Michael Holroyd

I. *Origin and Early Development of Greek Art*

In attempting to reconstruct and to estimate the peculiar excellence of Greek art we are in a sense aiming at the impossible; so much of the best Greek art has simply disappeared. The paint has perished, the bronze and marble have been melted down or used for lime. But we are at least far better off in these matters than our predecessors of even a hundred years ago. Archaeology has advanced by enormous strides: we have more material for study, above all more original Greek material, and our methods of study have been progressively improved. The precursors of scientific archaeology, men like Winckelmann and Lessing, in the eighteenth century, had to formulate their criteria of Hellenic beauty from what we should now consider degraded works of a tasteless and decadent age—such as the Laocoön—or at best from indifferent copies of such statues, themselves comparatively late, as the Apollo Belvedere and the Apoxyomenus. The opening of Greece itself to students of ancient architecture and sculpture early in the nineteenth century and the immortal enterprise of Lord Elgin enabled the archaeologists of the next generation to form a truer estimate of the excellence of real Greek work, though not of course the work of the greatest masters. For, amazing though it seems to us, the Parthenon pediment, metopes, and frieze were by no means famous in antiquity, and though they undoubtedly represent the general level of attainment in Periclean Athens it is by no means certain that we are not doing an injustice to Phidias' supreme excellence when

we assume that his individual style is to be recognized in the Parthenon sculptures or in any given portion of them.

About the middle of the nineteenth century such great archaeologists as Brunn and Newton made another advance by undertaking the intensive study of Greco-Roman copies in Rome and elsewhere, in the light both of the newly discovered Greek originals of the fifth and following centuries and of the copious but often confused accounts of Greek statues preserved in such ancient writers as Pliny, Lucian, and Pausanias. As a result of their labours the broad lines of development of Greek sculpture in the classic period—the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.—were laid down with tolerable certainty. Since then the work has been carried on in more detail by other investigators, notably by Adolf Furtwängler, the greatest of all students of Greek art. Quite recently the same method—that of Morelli in Italian painting—has been applied with even more striking success to Greek vase-painting, especially by J. D. Beazley.

Meanwhile, the excavations of the last half-century, in important centres such as the Panhellenic sanctuaries at Olympia and Delphi and on the acropolis at Athens, have made it possible to appreciate the great works of the fifth-century masters, of Phidias, Myron, and Polycletus, in their true historical perspective. For we are now acquainted with some of the masterpieces of the immediately preceding epoch, such as the Delphi charioteer and the Olympia pediments and metopes, and furthermore with a series of earlier works, e.g. the colossal Apollo by Polymedes of Argos (also from Delphi). An instructed opinion is, in fact, now for the first time possible as to the origins and early history of Greek art.

The old ideas about Hellenic art have been supplemented or corrected by these recent discoveries in three principal ways, as to the first beginnings, as to the influence of Egypt, and as to the chief stages in the development of archaic sculpture in the later sixth century.

To take first the questions of origins: we have to recognize that in a general way 'the Aegean culture was the mother of the greatness of classical Greece' (Mr. A. J. B. Wace). At the same time direct contact in the artistic sphere has not yet been established and may almost be said to have been disproved. Quite enough sites in the Aegean region have been thoroughly ransacked to enable us to say for certain that in every district where Mycenean civilization was later followed by that of classical Greece, there was an artistic gap of several centuries between the two civilizations; and not merely an empty void, but a gap filled by an alien and intrusive 'geometric' style of art. The influence of that style maintained itself (as may be clearly seen in the vase-painting) well into the classical period. In some ways it had a valuable effect in compelling the vase-painters, for instance, to confine their pictorial and naturalistic designs within the set limits, only gradually changed, of rectilinear borders and patterns. In the main, however, the geometric style was a prison within which the old and fanciful spirit of Cretan and Mycenean art was cramped against its will and to its detriment.

In the escape from this geometric prison, which took place about 700 B.C., at the very period when Greek pirates, traders, and colonists were covering the waters of almost the entire Mediterranean, the artists of Old Greece were preceded by those of the Ionian and other Greek settlements on the Asiatic coast of the Aegean. Cities like Miletus and Phocaea, founded mainly from Athens several centuries before, were, be it noted, no less the pioneers in Greek art and poetry than in science or in political development. It is not yet, however, possible to say whether these eighth- and seventh-century artists of Ionia were original in inspiration or themselves depended on some influence from without. In any case it was not Phoenician. The old idea that art, like letters, came to the Greeks from Phoenicia has been completely given up.

That 'huckster-people' has been shown to have been as imitative in art as in other matters. But it does still seem possible that the earliest post-geometric artists of Ionian Greece may have begun by learning from non-Greek craftsmen at some unknown centre, themselves in contact with the contemporary art of Assyria. Perhaps in some such indirect way reminiscences of Mycenean art may have been preserved.

The earliest known products of Greek art, in the full sense, are from the site of the temple of Diana at Ephesus whence Dr. Hogarth exhumed them some twenty years ago, and they certainly show a remarkably close connexion with ivories from Nimroud in Assyria. Excavations at Carchemish on the Euphrates in North Syria, resumed for a short time by Englishmen at the end of the War, appeared to reveal the existence of a previously unknown but quite considerable culture in the Cilician and North Syrian region, a culture susceptible to Assyrian influence, yet fundamentally independent in character: the connexions seemed, indeed, to be rather with the Mediterranean than with the Asiatic world. The date of this 'new' culture would be exactly such as to give it the opportunity of controlling the earliest efforts of the nascent Greek civilization; and Assyrian records, partly preserved in the traditions of classical writers, show how this might have happened. There is evidence of the presence of Ionian buccaneers in Cilicia and Cyprus and on the coast of Syria from the end of the eighth century B.C.[1] We hear of them as plundering the country, and on occasion stopping to establish fortresses and even to found principalities, almost like so many Crusaders. It is impossible, however, pending further discoveries, to say just how much of the first Ionian artistic productions may have been based on the results of their raids and conquests.

After the first step all is clear and straightforward. The

[1] See Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, pp. 218 and 310 ff.

cities of Ionia were ahead, but not far ahead, of other Greek centres such as Aegina, Corinth, Sicyon, and the cities of Euboea. In all these cities art, in the seventh and sixth centuries, went on rapidly from strength to strength. The sculptors, painters, and potters of different cities competed for the local and export markets, for Greece was already becoming, what it remained till the later fifth century, the great manufacturing region of the Mediterranean world. By the seventh century Greek wares were being bought eagerly everywhere, from Spain and Etruria to the Crimea, so swift and eager was the maritime enterprise of these countrymen of Odysseus, and in all this earliest stage of Greek production the native qualities of design and formal construction were so strong that foreign elements in decorative detail were absorbed with ease. It is customary to refer to this period (perhaps the greatest creative age the world has ever known) as the Orientalizing Period, just as it is fashionable nowadays to trace oriental influence everywhere in the corresponding age of Medieval European art and even in the Renaissance. But it must be remembered that many of the so-called oriental *motifs* are characteristic of the old Aegean crafts, and we cannot tell how common Minoan and Mycenean 'objets d'art' may have been in the seventh century.[1] So that at least for archaic Greece the oriental hypothesis fails to maintain itself.[2] Throughout the development there is no more than a single step between each figure and its immediate successor. Egyptian influence counts for something, but it is fully and easily absorbed, swallowed as it were at a gulp, and forms no perceptible gap in the continuous series.

In certain departments, notably in vase-painting, the

[1] In Crete prehistoric seals were in everyday use as amulets down to a few years ago and led Sir Arthur Evans to his discoveries.

[2] For further evidence see Mr. Casson's article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1922, pp. 207–19, especially on the evolution of the standing male figure.

art of this period must be noted as forming an exception to the general simplicity of design which is so characteristic of early Greek art. In their exuberant delight in escaping from the frosty rigidities of the geometric style, the Greek craftsmen filled up every tiny gap in their designs with scraps of ornament. They were probably influenced by the meaningless patches of ornament—curls, rosettes, and so forth—in contemporary textile work, something like a modern Turkey carpet. But they recovered quickly from this first mistake. The 'proto-Corinthian' vases, before 600 B.C., and the later Ionian, Chalcidian, and Athenian 'black-figured' wares of the sixth century, are already unsurpassed for skill in the balance of the figures and spaces and the use of the subsidiary patterns and borders to heighten the effect.

Passing now to consider the second of the three recent additions to our knowledge of early Greek art, the use made by Greek artists and especially sculptors of Egyptian models, we need only point out the strict limits of Egyptian art itself. It is clear at once that the Greek craftsmen of the sixth century can have suffered little loss of independence from this source. There are, no doubt, numerous small objects of apparently Egyptian character manufactured by Greeks in centres like Rhodes in close touch with Egypt; they were mostly found at places like Naucratis and other Greek settlements or factories at 'treaty ports' rather than in Egypt itself. Such minor productions are unimportant in the general evolution of Greek art. The important point to remember is that—except very rarely as in the time of Akhenaton—Egyptian art was completely controlled by non-artistic motives mainly of a religious character: it could only supply the Greeks with a bare framework of the human figure, impressive in a massive sort of way, but unrelated to natural anatomical truth which in the Greek view was the indispensable condition in the quest of beauty. It was neces-

sary, as Professor Elliot Smith tells us,[1] for the ancient Egyptian to make such representation of the deceased as would enable his earthly soul or *Ka* to identify its dwelling-place. Hence they carefully depicted the face, but the rest of the body received only casual treatment and was represented in a stiff and formal manner.

We known that famous Greek artists like Theodorus of Samos visited Egypt in the sixth century, and even earlier Egyptian influence is traceable in the standing male figures made in every part of the Greek world, and notably, in the Peloponnese, by the guild of Cretan sculptors about 600 B.C. These men claimed to be descended from Daedalus and travelled from city to city on the mainland, forming the style of great artistic centres such as Argos and Sicyon. Hence there was contact and knowledge in abundance, but as in the case of mathematics, in which Greek genius turned to general purposes of science the practical methods of mensuration which they acquired in Egypt, so in sculpture they borrowed just what they and they alone were able to turn to full account. We are fortunately able to study their methods of improving on their Egyptian models by inspecting such a series of seated figures as we have from the temple avenue at Branchidae near Miletus, now in the British Museum. Some of these are almost direct imitations of the colossal Egyptian statues with which we are so familiar, while others show the instinctive feeling of their makers that for an artist to produce a heavy dummy as the statue of a human being is not 'playing the game'. The Greek chisels began to feel, at first uncertainly but with ever-growing skill, for the natural lines and modelling of the human body and for the real texture of its encompassing drapery. It is interesting to note how this striving after nature results at first in spoiling the whole effect. But the Greeks did not object to sacrificing a specious, if massive, dignity in order to satisfy their artistic conscience, and in

[1] *Ancient Egyptians*, revised edition, 1923, p. 125.

due course they had their reward in the achievement of a far greater beauty than had even been imagined by any Egyptian artist.

Similarly with the nude. The local differences between the statues made in different parts of the Greek world in the sixth century B.C. are very considerable. It was an age of experiment, of diversity, and of competition, in art as in commerce, and we possess so many nude male figures of this date, mostly life-size, that we can even discriminate between the various schools (Chian, Naxian, Argive, and so on), and can sometimes follow the process of development in a single school in some detail. But in all schools alike there is a common principle to be traced, and that is the increasing application, to all varieties of the Greco-Egyptian scheme, of the close and careful study of nature.

By the third quarter of the century this process had been completed and the next stage begun, at a time when the old Ionian centres had lost their independence and were subjects of a new Great Power, Persia. In mainland Greece, meanwhile, the orderly and conservative but wholly inartistic military aristocracy of Sparta had united nearly all the chief cities, soon including Athens herself, in a strong confederacy which was destined to defeat the incomparably larger forces sent by Persia in the years 481–479 to complete the conquest of Greece.

This brings us to the third great addition to our knowledge. Until the three most important Greek sites, Olympia, Delphi, and the acropolis of Athens, had been systematically excavated, i.e. until forty or fifty years ago, students of Greek art could only judge from later copies to what degree of excellence the sculptors of Greece had attained in the generation before the great age of Phidias and Polycletus. For example, the discovery at Athens of immediately pre-Persian masterpieces (together with a few very important works of the years just after the Persian invasion) enables us now to observe exactly how the

sculptors of several distinct but related schools, having attained a provisional mastery over the realistic surface-details of the human form, applied their results to the selection and improvement of ideal types, which again were combined and, so to speak, fused by Phidias and his contemporaries. By doing this, and at the same time increasing and deepening their predecessors' study of nature, they reached those truly sublime conceptions of godlike beauty which were to dominate all the future artistic achievement of antiquity. Only less wonderful, again, than these great works of the mid-fifth century are the productions of the previous generation, the 'transitional' marbles and bronzes of Delphi and Olympia. In these last we can best see how the schools of Dorian and Ionian sculpture were able to combine a technique which is beyond praise with a sense of ideal beauty, making up in manliness and vigour what it lacks, perhaps, compared with the Parthenon sculptures, in restraint and delicacy. In splendour and mastery of design it may be doubted if the Olympia sculptures, above all the West Pediment, in which the recent victories of the Greeks over Asiatic barbarism were symbolized by the legendary struggle of Lapiths and Centaurs, are at all inferior to the Parthenon pediments.

II. *Conditions and Circumstances affecting the Rise of Greek Art*

This unparalleled climax of artistic progress and the splendid achievements of the two following centuries could hardly have been achieved had not the Greeks been favoured beyond all European peoples by a social environment eminently suitable for art, and by a remarkable series of circumstances, geographical and historical. To say this is not to belittle the use they made of these advantages. In any case it must always remain a marvel that they should have succeeded, within the space of two centuries,

in rising from a state of comparative barbarism to a degree of civilization so perfect, intellectually and artistically, that no subsequent efforts, at least in Europe, have produced its equal. These favouring circumstances are clearly worth study. In the first place Greece as a whole was never seriously menaced by invasion, from the legendary time of Amazons and Centaurs right down to the historic age of the Persian attack. The Greeks of the archaic period were known and dreaded all over the eastern Mediterranean and even in South Italy, Spain, and Gaul, as pirates and adventurers who were bent on conquest and colonization as well as commerce and plunder, and could give at least as good as they got in a fight. For about six hundred years, in fact till the Roman conquest, the Greeks were by far the best soldiers and sailors round the Mediterranean. They were in great request as mercenaries, for instance, in Egypt, from the moment of their appearance, and even the Persians, cavalry-archers invincible on their own ground until the time of Alexander, were forced at the end of the fifth century to rely on Greek troops and Greek commanders for the defence and reconquest of their western dominions. This military superiority of the Greeks was first shown to the world in the Marathon campaign and led to the rise of the Athenian empire, but it had actually been effective for many generations before. It depended not only on the individual prowess of the Greek hoplite, i.e. heavy-armed foot-soldier, but also on the excellence of his drill, the intelligence of his commanders, and last but not least on the industrial skill and organization which supplied him with his weapons. For about ten generations, down to the latter part of the fifth century, the cities of Greece possessed an industrial monopoly in the Mediterranean—the Phoenician colonies of North Africa alone excepted—which enriched and supported her, as England was enriched and sustained by trade in the Napoleonic wars and after.

Cheek-piece thought to be from the helmet of Alcibiades, on which are embossed Aphrodite and Eros Eros was the badge borne by Alcibiades on his shield)

The picture above, from a wine-cup, shows warriors wearing helmets with cheek-pieces attached to them

(*From Furtwängler-Reichhold, Griechische Vasenmalerie, by permission of F. Bruckmann A. C., München*)

No doubt the progress of Greek artistic design owed something to the everyday requirements of the armourer's and herald's trades. For instance, the purchaser oi a shield would insist that his blazon, or the horrible grinning Gorgon's head with which like the Chinese warrior he would strike terror into his foes, should be painted as large as the space would allow, and this would set the fashion of generously planned design. Then when a coin, or the circular space in the centre of a plate or cup, came to be decorated with a head or any other artistic composition, a natural guide might be found in the style of shield ornamentation.

In the second place, the political and social circumstances of the Greeks were singularly favourable to artistic excellence. The city-state, which both to Greeks and Romans was the school of politics, was also to the Greeks, as afterwards in the Renaissance to the northern Italian, the forcing-ground of art. In those city-states of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. the vividness and vigour of local pride and patriotism were balanced and made fully effective in their influence on the artist by the ease and frequency of intercourse between city and city. The rivalry of artists in neighbouring cities and in their own made for progress, even more rapidly than it did in medieval and Renaissance Italy. The words of Vasari, the Herodotus of the arts, might with equal truth be used of old Greece as of the Italy he knew, where in every town the citizens were prepared to greet with enthusiastic praise or blame the latest production of poet, playwright, or artist, himself an important and ever-present critic of his rivals. 'Throughout that whole city', says Vasari of Donatello at Padua, 'there are innumerable works by his hand by reason of which he was held by the Paduans to be a marvel . . . but he determined to return to Florence, saying that if he remained in Padua any longer he would forget everything he knew, being so greatly praised there by all, and that

he was glad to return to his own country where he would gain nothing but censure, since such censure would urge him to study and enable him to attain to greater glory.'

The geographical position of Greece, its climate, the conditions of life, must all be allowed a share in the fostering of the Greek artistic genius, and among the political conditions the 'tyrants', as again in Italy, deserve some credit.

Climate controls costume or the lack of it, and in Greece both winter and summer conditions suggested clothing favourable to artistic use. A long heavy woollen cloak was worn in winter, not unlike that worn by officers in the Italian army, and in the summer for any sort of hard outdoor work, including athletic sports and fighting, the Greeks were apt to dispense almost altogether with clothes. For the Aegean summer is not, like the Arabian or Mesopotamian, so hot that head and body must be actually protected against the sun. Women's life tended, at least in the cities, to be spent more indoors than the men's, and they were accustomed to be more completely clad than their husbands and brothers. But even they wore costumes so light, and in the case of the Doric chiton opening so easily at the side, that the artistic portrayal of the nude female form seemed to be a perfectly natural and normal thing. It involved no impropriety except in the case of religious images which, in the case of goddesses though not of course in that of gods, were invariably draped until the time of Praxiteles. Nude male and draped female statues are common in the archaic period. At first the popular idea seems to have been to provide a mortal figure as servant to the deity and represented as worshipping him. Portraiture of individual men hardly begins till the fifth century; but when the fashion began of reproducing the actual features of victors in the Olympic Games on the votive statue set up by the victor, it became from this cause natural that most statues of

men, and in later times some of women also, should represent them nude. Every citizen who could afford the necessary gear was bound to serve as a hoplite, and the hoplites with their heavy shield and armour had always to keep themselves fit. Hence climate, military service, and games combined to present the Greek sculptor with the finest possible subject, the nude human form in perfect development and condition.

It must be noted also that the poets and artists of ancient Greece had a singularly beautiful mythology to illustrate. In a sense they created it, for the normal 'appeal to scripture' on religious questions was in Greece addressed to the poets, Homer and Simonides for choice. Sculpture, also, and painting shared in this inspiration, and there is abundant testimony to the deep religious feeling aroused by the contemplation of such statues as the gold and ivory Zeus of Phidias at Olympia and the great figures of deities by Myron and other artists elsewhere. Artists were able thus to design their images with a free hand owing to the absence in Greece of any priestly caste. Religion in the pagan world was first of all a matter of ancestor-worship and the propitiation of evil spirits. In these practices every head of a household was his own priest. Then later came the tribal or civic worship of certain deities recognized by the community as particularly sacred or specially concerned in its protection. Poets and artists, not controlled by priestly dogma, gave imaginative form to these deities.

Small wonder that in such an atmosphere of enthusiastic interest, with every external condition stimulating to success, the natural genius of the Greeks ripened rapidly. They had above all the interest and support of the mass of citizens, a difference between them and the modern world which it will fall to our later chapters to discuss. Their art sprang simply and naturally from the life of the people, and this is the full and satisfying explanation of the per-

fection of taste and absence of mannerism which we find in all great Greek work alike of the archaic and the classical epochs. All this was altered no doubt after Alexander, i.e. about 300 B.C. Then Hellenism, in the new centres of Greco-Macedonian power if not in the poverty-stricken cities of old Greece, inevitably became an artificial because an imported civilization, and the inferiority of much later work, particularly of the ambitious and innovating Pergamene and other Asiatic schools, is best explained as the result of this change of venue. In the Greco-Roman period things went from bad to worse. It was in an artistic sense an extension of the 'Hellenistic'—to use the current title. It was only in the healthier, if more barbaric, atmosphere of medieval Europe and the Saracen East that the arts of design were able, partially at least, to recover that popular character which always and everywhere is essential to soundness of taste.

III. *Greek Art in the Age of Phidias*

To depict the triumph of Greek art in the fifth century B.C. we must realize the position of Athens. No doubt the preparation may be traced in detail elsewhere, most plainly of all perhaps at Poseidon's town south of Naples, better known as Paestum, where the progress of the Doric order from sixth-century flat-capitalled long-shafted adolescence to fifth-century manhood may be seen to this day frozen in stone. But for the triumph we must go to Athens; for Athens under Pericles in the middle of the fifth century was more than the first of Greek cities intellectually, economically, and artistically. Pericles of set purpose made her in these spheres quite definitely the capital of Hellas. As a direct and most important step in the execution of this purpose he took the pains to secure the greatest artists in Greece. The Acropolis, the ancient fortress-rock which had once contained the entire city, was to be converted into a central shrine and sanctuary

worthy of a capital and the centre of an empire. By about the year 450 B.C. Pericles, by sheer force of character, had made himself practically dictator of Athens. But in all his plans and projects, financial, naval, colonial, and artistic, he had behind him the free vote of the people of Athens. Now this free citizen of Athens was an accomplished man. He had probably taken part in the production of one or more tragic or comic performances as a member of the highly trained chorus; he had served in the army and most likely in the navy too; he could pull an oar with skill and precision in a galley in the most scientifically run navy which had yet been seen; he was an experienced builder of walls and fortifications (and Greek fortifications, the work of common soldiers, are built of very beautiful masonry); he knew a great deal of Homer and the lyric and tragic poets by heart; and finally, if not himself an expert at vase-painting, bronze work, or some such craft, in which so large a proportion of Athenian citizens were employed, he could certainly criticize even Myron and Phidias with the understanding of an intelligent amateur. The public spirit and general interest of this democracy may be fairly gauged, as in any other age or country, by its ways of spending its surplus money. Judged in this way, medieval Europe would appear to be an age of cathedrals and fortifications, of private castles and public worship; ancient Rome and Renaissance Italy an age of private palaces and public show; our own age one of banks and clubs and railway stations, of hospitals and museums, with a fair allowance of private palaces and country houses. The Athens of Pericles, seen from this angle, has a certain resemblance to medieval Christendom and almost no point of similarity with our own age. The richer men in Athens were compelled by law, if not otherwise willing, to spend enormously on public services, partly naval or military, partly civil and religious in character. To equip a trireme and keep it in repair, to train and fit out a tragic

or comic chorus for a religious festival, these were among the public obligations which effectively took the place of a super-tax, and co-operated with the natural prejudices of a thorough-going democracy to prevent the well-to-do from spending their money on costly private dwellings. A rich man's natural desire to possess a racing stable and win chariot-races at the Games also helped in the same direction, and the consequence was that even Pericles himself, who came of an old and rich family, lived in quite a small house, in no way distinguishable from a middle-class dwelling of Athens, with its little bedrooms and large dining-hall opening on to a small courtyard or garden, and with a women's quarter strictly separated from the rest of the house. In striking contrast to this remarkable moderation in private buildings the public splendour of the Acropolis, with its group of large and glorious temples, its high walled platform and its entrance-building or Propylaea, must have made as dominating an impression in ancient Athens as the vast bulk of a Gothic cathedral rising over a little medieval town. Even as seen to-day, above the rather dull modern city, the ruins of the fifth-century buildings produce a notable and triumphant effect. The soaring weight of the Parthenon, an enormous building yet standing with the easy buoyancy of a young athlete, the delicate correctness of the Erechtheum, that eccentrically planned sanctuary or group of sanctuaries best known to us through the Caryatid figure now in the British Museum, the grand proportions and perfect construction of the Propylaea, flanked by a jewel of architecture in the little temple of Wingless Victory on its projecting bastion—all these, seen even from a distance, form an enchanting and beautifully contrasted composition for which Pericles and his adviser Phidias deserve the world's eternal gratitude.

The Parthenon and Erechtheum must be seen to be appreciated: no photograph can give any adequate idea of

the wonderful harmony, delicacy, and freshness of their appearance; while the Parthenon is planned with such a masterly understanding of the niceties of optical science that its refinements of proportion and outline can only be taken in by the eye itself. But the splendid setting and masonry of the Propylaea and Nike temple, and the carefully calculated distances between the columns of the Propylaea, can be seen admirably with the aid of a camera. So, too, can the details of the architecture of the Nike temple and its sculptural decoration. The temple itself was reconstructed about a century ago by archaeologists from an immense number of scattered fragments, the Turks having pulled it down to make room for a cannon.

So much for the city and people of Athens, and the social and architectural environment within which sculpture and painting achieved their triumphs.

At the beginning of the Great Age Greek art was still divided between two main schools, corresponding roughly to the Dorian or Peloponnesian and the Ionian or insular and Asiatic branches of the Greek race. The former may be best represented, though at a rather earlier date, by the Apollo of Canachus, the great sixth-century sculptor of Sicyon near Corinth. A good copy of it, the Piombino bronze, is in the Louvre. The latter is less easy to exemplify, but the ever-charming reliefs of the Ludovisi Throne at the Terme Museum in Rome—'Venus rising from the Sea' and 'Sacred and Profane Love'—are typical of the romantic grace, combined with a truly remarkable realism in detail, which seems to have been associated with at least some branches of the Ionian School. In their kind these reliefs are unsurpassable, but the work of both schools was destined to be fused into one superb unity by the masters of fifth-century Athens, to which artists came from all over Greece. This brings us to what is really the most important and difficult problem in the history of Greek art: namely, how and by whom was this fusion

achieved? In the years just after the Persian Wars, we find, besides the continuing activity of local schools, the sudden emergence of what might almost be called a Pan-Hellenic Style, a noble and severe and powerfully constructed style with no special attachment to any previous works, so far as can at first be seen. This great Style or School of sculpture—called the 'Strenge Stil' by the Germans—is again quite distinct from, and even markedly contrasting with, the more controlled and balanced work of the Phidian and Polycletan schools, half a generation later; but does not necessarily, or even probably, derive from different geographical centres. The 'red-figured' vases of Athens, in fact, show both styles as clearly as do the statues and reliefs; and so do the coins of Syracuse and many other cities. The contrast is very like that between the styles of the great Italian painters and sculptors of the mid-Quattrocento and of the early Cinquecento: the styles of Piero, the Pollaiuoli, Mantegna and of Lionardo, Giorgione and Raphael. Very possibly what happened in Greece is really due to a sudden concentration, in several centres, of artists trained in diverse traditions yet filled with a common inspiration; something like this happened more than once in Italy, at Assisi in the early Trecento, at Padua in Squarcione's time, at Rome about 1500. The famous, but still too little appreciated, sculptures of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia best represent, to us, the earlier of these two great styles; the Parthenon sculptures the second. Other works of the earlier style (sometimes called the 'transitional' style) are the charioteer at Delphi, and, still earlier, the Tyrannicides by Critius and Nesiotes and the Ephebe-head of the Athenian Acropolis—almost certainly by the same hand as the Apollo from the West Pediment at Olympia.

It is impossible to say just who were these great 'transitional' masters. Various names occur in our written sources—Pythagoras of Samos and Rhegium, Phidias'

master Hegias, Calamis of Athens, and others—but all we know is that they worked about this time and may, indeed must, have been influenced by the ' Strenge Stil ', if they were not actually creating it. Even if we can, or think we can, trace particular currents and phases of artistic influence in originals or copies, we still cannot be sure of the authorship of particular works; a statement which, it is true, applies almost equally to many other episodes of art-history, in Greece and elsewhere. Suffice it to say that, in this period of twenty or thirty years after the Persian invasion, we find a group of men whose creative achievement in the world of art has never been surpassed and very seldom approached in other times and other countries.

Next we come to the work of a man who, but for the fact that Phidias was born a few years after him, would probably have come down to posterity as the greatest sculptor of that or any other age. This is Myron, a native of Eleutherae, a village in Boeotia, the mother-country of his great contemporary Pindar, the supreme lyric poet. Myron belonged by choice and by artistic lineage to the neighbouring city of Athens, then in its prime. In him we have a master, supreme alike in the creative development of the traditional types and the careful and energetic study of the proportion and rhythm of anatomy. The familiar conception of Apollo, Heracles, and the rest owe probably most to his former quality, and the pose and motion of athletic figures, especially the famous Discobolus, bespeak the latter excellence. The group of Athena and Marsyas shows him at his best in both directions. The Athena—a charmingly fresh and girlish figure, though serious enough in expression—is a model of what a goddess should be. And in the satyr Marsyas, starting back in surprise at the backward glance of the angry goddess, we have a perfect instance of Myron's success in rendering movement by choosing an instant of pause and poise.

For the best judgement on these and other works of the heyday of Greek sculpture we must turn to Furtwängler's invaluable *Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture*. The great German critic may be, no doubt must be, mistaken in some of his attributions, but his main classification stands firm. He sees in the Kassel Apollo the typical cult-statue of Myron's school, and in the Perseus head an example of the master's own design. He seems right also in attributing to Phidias or his school the originals of a large group of copies of which the 'Lemnian' Athena of Bologna and Dresden, and the Apollo in the Terme Museum in Rome, are the chief. In these we have the perfect contour of head and face, the loftily conceived proportions, the grace and delicacy of the figure, and the divine look in the eyes, which combine to make the Greek ideal. The conception of beauty shown in such statues as these is complete, based on perfect knowledge and exquisite intuition. It is true alike to nature and tradition, and if Phidias is not the sculptor, he must be greater than Phidias, for in these works we see at their best the proportion, harmony, and finish which together make the classic style.

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V

LATER GREEK AND ROMAN ART

By Michael Holroyd

I. *From Phidias and Polycletus to Scopas and Praxiteles*

The fine flower of art can only bloom to perfection in the most favourable conditions, and seldom wholly survives any great social convulsion. When, as in the latter years of the fifth century B.C., a long and devastating war is accompanied by a serious epidemic and general impoverishment,[1] it is not surprising to find that art in conformity with the political and economic situation suffered a decline and partial collapse. With this decline of Greek and downfall of Attic art we may compare the sudden check to the creative impulse in Italy after the Black Death, which was followed by a full half-century of stagnation (1350–1400), and the final close of the Renaissance period (Venice alone excepted) as a result of the terrible French and German-Spanish invasions under Francis I and Charles V. The fact that fourth-century Greece recovered as well as it did from the disasters of the pre-

[1] This impoverishment, though largely the direct result of war conditions, was probably inevitable in the long run owing to a 'centrifugal' tendency in manufactures and trade over the Greek world as a whole. Such a tendency would appear to be a natural part of any civilization, reasonably situated as to transport, and in which industrial methods, invented in one centre, can be copied elsewhere; we see a very similar process operating to-day. In ancient Greece, by the very peculiar circumstances of the Persian Wars and the succeeding half-century, an unusual 'centripetal' movement had been brought about; but it could only be temporary, and the revival of industry in the Greek cities of Asia, with marked development in those of South Italy, Sicily, and other distant colonies, was simply a matter of time.

vious period is the best testimony to the vigour and wide distribution of the highest Hellenic culture. There could never again be any single centre of such artistic and intellectual brilliance, possessing so predominant an influence over the rest of Greece, as the Athens of Pericles and Phidias, though the Peloponnesian schools of sculpture and painting, notably those of Argos and Sicyon, suffered little if at all from the disaster to Athens. As the fourth century went on the old centres of Ionia and new cities like Halicarnassus, the capital of Mausolus the Carian dynast, came to take a larger and larger share in the economic and artistic life of Greece. At the same time the effect of Athenian predominance in the last century had been so all-pervading that Greek art became, in a sense, national, and was never again to be an affair of competing and separate local schools. The work of a fourth-century sculptor like the Parian Scopas, who did not live in Athens and was connected primarily with Peloponnesian masters, can be classified as really belonging to the Attic school.[1]

The Athenian influence was not of course confined to the arts of design. The common language of later Greece, as contrasted with the old local dialects which still survived in many parts of Greece all through the Hellenistic epoch, was based primarily on the dialect of Athens. The theatre also, in the fifth century almost an Athenian monopoly, now became as universal among the Greeks as city walls and temples; and science and philosophy, though the philosophers themselves came from all parts of Greece, and even in later times from Semitic Carthage and semi-barbarous Cyprus, remained permanently attached to Athens as the chief centre of study. 'Athens' in Pericles' phrase 'had made herself the school of Greece.' The great fifth-century masters of sculpture and painting had covered their chosen ground so thoroughly

[1] As in H. Stuart Jones's invaluable collection of ancient authorities on Greek sculpture.

that later artists found it an ungrateful task to compete with them in the production of public monuments and statues of gods in the heroic style. It has even been said that all statues of gods, after the fifth century, are essentially variants and combinations of the types created by Phidias and his contemporaries. At the same time, patrons of the arts in the fourth century tended to be private individuals rather than public communities; for no state in the fourth century disposed of resources at all comparable to those of fifth-century Athens, and even the smaller cities were mostly provided, by the end of the fifth century, with their necessary complement of temples and temple-statues.[1] It was therefore quite natural that post-Phidian Greek art should seek new subjects such as portraiture, which had been comparatively neglected, for reasons stated in the last chapter, in earlier periods; and that, if and when they continued to carve or paint the Olympian deities, the artists of Praxiteles' generation should have concentrated their energies on representing more purely sensuous beauty, and on expressing the emotional (in the Greek sense of the word, the 'pathetic') qualities rather than the dignified and sublime character of their subjects. This can readily be seen by comparing, for instance, the Apollo of Olympia, cold and terrible, or the great Kassel Apollo, probably Myron's, with almost any fourth-century Apollo, say the Sauroctonus of Praxiteles, a delicate and picturesque person of infinite grace and charm but bearing little resemblance to the radiant and dangerous Apollo of Homer or of Aeschylus. Even if Praxiteles be put aside as too extreme an instance—for he, like Leonardo da Vinci, was above all interested in problems of naturalism and technique and in the choice of wonderfully modulated and perfectly balanced poses for his statues—one must admit that the other fourth-

[1] Mausolus, despot of Caria, is the exception that proves this rule.

century masters, such as the creator, who may have been Scopas, of the much-copied Apollo with hair plaited straight up from the centre of the forehead, treat their subject by preference as the dreamy, sensitive Master of the Muses rather than in his sterner and more vigorous aspects as the inspirer of Hellenic victory, or the fierce, destructive sun-god.

In painting no less than in sculpture the expression of feeling and passion was now studied, as by Timanthes in his 'Sacrifice of Iphigenia'. No less typical of fourth-century taste is the prevailing tendency to choose subjects like Cupid and Psyche, Diana, Venus and the Graces, or, again, Dionysus and his rout of satyrs and Bacchanals; contrast the youthful, almost feminine Bacchus of the period with the bearded Dionysus from Pompeii, who reflects the ideal of a pre-Phidian school, perhaps contemporary with the Olympia sculptures. Purely allegorical conceptions, such as the Sleep (Hypnos) of the British Museum, also become increasingly common in Praxiteles' generation. In athletic sculpture alone do we find a direct continuance of fifth-century tradition: the followers of Polycletus in Argos and Sicyon reproduced his vigorous style with very little change, though even they preferred the more refined and delicate characteristics of their master's conceptions. The bodily proportions of Peloponnesian figures gradually altered, in this way, in the direction of grace and suppleness, and the long-limbed figures of Lysippus, in the following generation, formed the natural term of this development.

II. *The Second Climax of Greek Art: the Age of Alexander*

Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *History of the World*, devotes perhaps a quarter of his section on ancient Greece to the period ending with Demosthenes—the Age of the free city-states—and perhaps three-quarters to the Age of

Alexander and of his successors, the Macedonian monarchs who parcelled out the Persian empire which he had conquered, and spread Hellenism in the East with surprising energy and success, from Egypt and Thrace to the very borders of the advancing Chinese Empire. Monarchy is less popular now than in that great Age of Princes, the Renaissance; but if we have gained much by the change we have lost something too.

The military and political achievements of the Age of Alexander and of his successors, for so long a time underrated by English historians—Grote above all—whose admiration for democratic Athens blinded them to the greatness of Athens' conquerors, were accompanied by a vast range of artistic and intellectual efforts and triumphs, almost superior (in quantity and magnificence if not in absolute quality) to those of the Periclean Age itself. The natural and mechanical sciences, not to mention the logic and metaphysics, of Aristotle and his successors mark the climax of ancient endeavour in those spheres, and were not destined to be surpassed for almost two thousand years. Engineering and town-planning, oriental discovery and the settlement of new Hellenic or imitation-Hellenic communities in many lands, as far abroad as India and the slopes of the Pamirs, made the Macedonian epoch a period of wide expansion, of suddenly opening opportunities, of adventure on a grand scale: any poor hill-shepherd of Arcadia or Aetolia might hope, when he marched off to Asia a plain mercenary soldier, to find a sceptre in his knapsack or at least to reach a place of honour and wealth in one of the many new-founded kingdoms then in process of evolution all over Alexander's dominions.

These conditions had their effect upon the art of the time. In it the new freedom of the great spaces and the new science of the laboratory and the dissecting-room can both be very clearly traced. Lysippus, himself a sur-

vivor of the Praxitelean Age, and (traditionally) the greatest Greek sculptor after Phidias, embodies the tendencies of his period more fully than any other artist. The proportions of his figures, slender and small-boned, with a far smaller head than those of Polycletus' canon, bespeak an original and independent outlook which earned him the reputation of being 'self-taught', and made his style for centuries the normal basis of sculptural method. It is, of course, very possible that the average stature of the Greek people had been increased by the universal practice of athletic training in the century and a half separating Lysippus from the archaic sculptors, whose strongly knit, big-headed, squat-bodied figures differ from those of Lysippus very much as the figures of Rowlandson or Charles Keene differ from those of Claude Shepperson. It would be interesting, had we the time, to examine in detail the other great change in Greek sculpture which was perhaps chiefly due to Lysippus, viz. the development of design from what may be called the two-dimensional to the three-dimensional stage: most of the groups and even single figures, before Lysippus, were designed to be seen from the front, or at any rate from one particular point of view. The Athena and Marsyas of Myron, the Doryphorus of Polycletus, and the Demeter from Cnidus are examples from different periods; whereas, from Lysippus onward, sculptors were usually thinking, in planning their works, of how they would look from any given direction. The well-known 'Apoxyomenus' is the statue most frequently quoted in this connexion; but if the effect of that vilely executed copy is any guide to the effect of the original it would redound to the eternal discredit of so great a sculptor as Lysippus to have produced so unpleasing a creation. There is, however, at least a possibility that the work may be a copy, not of Lysippus' famous 'Apoxyomenus' but of another statue of doubtless somewhat similar character, called the 'Perixyomenus', by a late

and not very important member of the Lysippic school Whichever it is, it looks equally well (or ill) from every direction, and serves admirably to illustrate the special character of all-round design[1]—and its aesthetic unimportance.

The effect on sculpture of anatomical study, referred to above, came too late to affect the art of the greatest masters. Aesthetically, indeed, the result so far as we can judge was bad rather than good: one finds the later 'Hellenistic' sculptors so strongly absorbed in the fascination of anatomic discovery that they give their new knowledge an altogether disproportionate place in the design, and thus produce such monstrosities as the Borghese Warrior or the Laocoön, all bulges and curves of exaggerated muscle and taut sinews, bursting out through the flesh that should cover them, or even obscuring the main lines of the skeletal architecture of the body. This failure to apply the new anatomical knowledge of the time with due moderation and proportion—'ex sapientia modum, quod difficillimum est', as Tacitus puts it in a different connexion—is but one among many signs of that decadence, partial it is true and by no means universal, which can be traced so clearly in the middle and later Hellenistic Age, especially in the work of those schools of sculpture (mainly in Greek Asia) which insisted on 'exploring new avenues' and attempting new effects at all costs. 'De plus fort en plus fort' and 'Toujours de l'audace!' would appear to be fatal maxims, in art at any rate. We in England are singularly free from examples of these later Pergamene, Ephesian, and Trallian schools; but they seem to find their way naturally to Berlin, where the great Altar of Zeus, from Pergamon, has been reconstructed at great and most praiseworthy pains and expense.

[1] The best example of 'all-round design' in the whole range of European art, ancient or modern, is probably Rodin's 'Burghers of Calais'.

One would not wish to convey the impression that all the work of these later schools, even their deliberately spectacular and 'theatrical' work, is intrinsically worthless. The Venus of Melos, the Sleeping Faun at Munich, the Medusa Ludovisi, and many another masterpiece of surpassing beauty would confound detractors of what was, altogether, a period of high and remarkable achievement. But a marked decline of taste may be seen in many of the most ambitious works of the third and second centuries B.C. In the age of Alexander and immediately thereafter, on the other hand, we find a series of monumental works of only less striking originality and greatness than those of the Phidian period itself. Thus we have, in London, the well-known 'Hermes' relief from the lowest drum of a column of the new Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, which was built to replace the older one which was burnt down on the night when Alexander was born, and, more characteristic of its age though too little known, the superb gigantomachy-reliefs from the cubes below that drum, and other drums from the same temple. In Paris there is the admirable Nike of Samothrace, made to commemorate a victory of the sea-king Demetrius about 303 B.C.; and in Rome, the Meleager in the Villa Medici garden,[1] the bronze original of which may have been as dramatic as the marble copy is theatrical, and the Chiaramonti Niobid, which is either the actual original or else a wonderfully good copy of one of the Niobid group preserved, as a whole, in a far inferior version at Florence.[2]

[1] The Meleager has usually been identified as a work of Scopas, or as a school-work very close to that of the master. This is a mistake: the head-form and the general proportions show the influence of the Lysippic school, and Scopas' influence appears only, or mainly, in the expression of the eye and the roll of flesh above it.

[2] The comparison of these two shows better than any mere verbal warnings how great an allowance must be made elsewhere in these matters: 'ex uno disce omnes'.

But the works of this age which are most instructive for our present purpose—and indeed they have shed a clearer light on Greek sculpture as a whole than almost any discovery of the last fifty years—are the reliefs of the 'Alexander Sarcophagus', now at Constantinople. They were found *in situ* at Sidon, the ancient capital of Phoenicia—a most unlikely place, one would have thought, in which to look for first-rate Greek work until about the third century B.C. The royal house of Sidon, however, as we know from inscriptions, had very close trade relations with fourth-century Athens; and that they got Greek artists to make them their tombs is only in keeping with what we are beginning to understand from other sources of the enormous extent of Greek influence, spread by mercenaries, traders, and even administrators throughout the western provinces of the Persian empire in the fourth century B.C. These Sidon tombs are great sarcophagi, architecturally constructed and richly carved all round. They cover about three generations and represent extremely well the best Greek art of their respective dates. Until their discovery they lay just as they were originally placed, in air-tight underground chambers; to this we owe the entire preservation of the colouring[1] which was put on all Greek marble sculpture of the best periods as a matter of course; and it is this that gives them their supreme importance. But for these sarcophagi we should not have understood, for want of actual examples, the wonderful realism of detail which, in the works of the great age of Greece, went hand-in-hand with the most choice and even rigorous idealism of form.

[1] Praxiteles once eluded the interested curiosity of some inquisitive busybody, who had asked him which of his statues was really his own favourite, by answering, 'The ones which have had the advantage of being coloured by the painter Mys.' If a Greek critic could see the marbles in our best museums, he would say that they were altogether incomplete without their colouring.

Sculpture, in the art of Renaissance Italy, came to perfection at an earlier date than painting; and Flinders Petrie, in his interesting little survey, *The Revolutions of Civilization*, maintains that, at least in the western world, this phenomenon is one that presents itself, regularly and unfailingly, at each successive climax of the cycles of artistic excellence and decline. It is not easy from the remains of Greek painting, which, of course, are relatively and even absolutely less comprehensive for the Greek than for the Egyptian and Cretan civilizations, to say whether this is entirely true of classic Hellas. But, for what it is worth, the testimony of later writers on art, mostly of the Greco-Roman age, is altogether in agreement with such a view: to them the age of Alexander (that is, the age of the painters Apelles and Protogenes, more particularly) was very distinctly that of the highest achievement in this kind. In architecture, the period which begins with the construction (about 350 B.C.) of that apotheosis of tomb-design, the Mausoleum, can at least be said to have maintained very worthily the traditions of the previous period, and to have shown at the same time a great deal of originality: the originality, it is true, of Wren and of the later architects of Renaissance Venice, exemplified by St. Paul's, Tom Tower at Oxford, and Santa Maria della Salute, rather than that of Brunelleschi and Alberti, but originality of a very real and valuable kind.

To sum up: the age of Alexander, in spite of the considerable diversion of interest and talent into the fields of scientific discovery and practical business, was nevertheless, in artistic matters, very notable; and without superseding or going beyond the achievements of Phidias, Polycletus, and their contemporaries, the artists of a century later, so far as we can judge of their work, seem to have freed themselves to a certain extent from the more deadening influences of the already academic tradition,

while at the same time preserving much of the classic quality of their predecessors' great creations.

III. *Later Hellenism and the Art of Republican and Imperial Rome*

Greece was fortunate, as will have been understood from the preceding chapter, in very many respects; and not least so in the fact that her conquerors, the Macedonians first and then the Romans, were most powerfully impressed by the Greek civilization and did their best, almost always, to preserve and extend it. Ignorant and tasteless they may have been, and incapable of emulating the creative work of their subjects; but deliberate and senseless destruction, like that of the French, Spaniards, and Germans in Renaissance Italy, was very seldom carried out, whether by Macedonians or by Romans, and then only after what they at least considered to have been wanton and repeated provocation. Rebels, both to an Alexander and to a Sulla, were people who had to be punished; but Hellenism, as such, was felt to bestow an unusual claim to indulgence even upon rebels, and in ordinary circumstances the conquerors felt such an exalted respect for the civilization of the conquered—which, indeed, was their own civilization so far as they were civilized at all—that they made great efforts to protect and extend it wherever they possibly could. Philip and Alexander, indeed, made it their proudest boast that they were themselves of Hellenic lineage, and the Macedonian victory over Persia was advertised with all the immense resources of contemporary propaganda as a war of revenge, in retaliation for the Persian invasions of Greece five generations before, and even as a sort of enlarged renewal of the epic struggle of Achaeans and Trojans. As champions of Hellenism the Macedonian kings after Alexander found it convenient to pay lip-service even to the old familiar Greek parrot-cry of 'Autonomy all round!'—the

'Self-determination' of an earlier day; although it must be admitted that in actual practice most of these monarchs showed themselves much more enthusiastic for the autonomy of the city-states in one another's dominions than in their own. Indeed, the comparatively free position of the Greek cities under the Macedonian rule may be held to have been pretty directly due to the fact that that rule was always, after Alexander's death, distributed between three or more independent and mutually hostile realms, whose claims to suzerainty the skilful adroitness of Greek diplomats learnt to play off one against another, so that, when Rome came on the scene after her great struggle with Carthage at the end of the third century B.C., it was easy and natural for her to pose as the protector of the city-states against the then threatening power of the Antigonid Kings of Macedonia proper, or the Seleucid Kings of Syria and the farther East. Once committed to the position of Liberator, the Romans, had they wished to do so, could not consistently have oppressed the Greek cities; but of course they had, in ordinary circumstances, no wish to do anything of the sort. Many Greek towns famous in earlier days, Athens, Rhodes, and Byzantium, for instance, preserved their autonomy and maintained the self-governing institutions of the typical city-state long after the assemblies in the capital itself had lost their powers of election and legislation. By that time, it is true, the city-state was, for all practical purposes, a mere municipality, no more and no less 'autonomous' than Verona or Lyons or any other purely Roman *colonia* or *municipium* in the western provinces of the empire; but, as a rule, in Greece there was no actual break in political continuity.

In these circumstances the culture and even the political institutions of the Greek cities had the best possible chance of being maintained and as we might say 'broadcasted', albeit in a rather too highly standardized form, throughout

the vast regions contained in the Macedonian and Roman empires. From Britain to Bactria, and from the Saharan sands to the Danube and the Carpathians, the broad features of civilized life in the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman periods were very much the same—if allowance be made for the difference between those regions, in the west and north especially, to which Greek civilization was carried *at second hand* by the Roman armies and traders, and those in which it was *directly* planted by Greek settlement or commercial penetration, i.e. in the Near and Middle East. Everywhere the literary and athletic education conformed, more or less, to one common type; everywhere the public buildings, temples, theatres and so forth belonged in style to the Greek tradition, and such sculpture and painting as there was depended entirely on Greek models. Individual provinces may have had, as it were, their special artistic dialects, and barbaric traits of varying kinds may have predominated in varying degrees in the more distant regions. But the broad generalization remains true and must be strongly insisted on, that the art of the Roman Empire, what there was of it—and in many far-off lands, e.g. Southern Gaul and the Roman province of Africa, there was a great deal of it—was almost purely Greek in origin and inspiration. It would be just as much of a mistake to call Roman Art an independent phenomenon (as distinguished from Greek Art), as to draw a similar distinction between the art of America and that of Europe to-day.

Controversy has raged so furiously of recent years about this question of Roman Art that we must enter upon a short discussion of the main resemblances and differences between the art of Republican and Imperial Rome, on the one hand, and that of the Hellenized regions of the Eastern Mediterranean on the other. The question at issue, it is true, is mainly one of definition, but those who argue for the independent existence of Roman Art appear

to differ fundamentally from their antagonists in their ideas of what are really the essential qualities of art. They seem also, to the present writer at least, not to have considered sufficiently that, in many instances, e.g. in portrait sculpture, an alleged specifically Roman character may be merely a failure to achieve high artistic quality at all.

The Art of the Hellenistic Age has not yet been studied in sufficient detail or with sufficient completeness for us to be able to assign individual works, except in a few well-known instances of particularly clearly marked developments, e.g. in the Pergamene School, to their correct age and date.[1] This is especially true for works of an eclectic and more or less directly imitative character; works of this sort were extremely common throughout the Hellenistic Age, and generally achieved a far higher level of excellence than the deliberately fresh and spectacular creations referred to in the last section. Who, for example, can tell us the place and even the century to which we should assign such noble and beautiful works as the Psyche of Capua, the Dancing Faun, or the Satyr with the Wine-skin in the Naples Museum? They are probably the work of some clever Neapolitan or Campanian school, perhaps designed to be sold as 'Greek originals' to connoisseurs of the early Imperial Age; but they may very well be real 'Greek originals' of almost any late period, and from almost any artistic centre. Who, again, can give the date and place of the 'Fanciulla d'Anzio', or of the fine helmeted head of Mars in the Barraco collection at Rome? The fact is that, after the close of the 'Classical Period' of Greek art, i.e. from about the time of Lysippus and his immediate pupils, the possibilities of sculpture, eccentric

[1] G. Dickins's (posthumous) *Hellenistic Sculpture* is an able work, but exaggerates the distinction that can be made between various supposedly local schools; for a more critical survey, see A. W. Lawrence, *Later Greek Sculpture*, 1927.

and frenetic developments apart, had been so thoroughly explored that any artist in any centre, provided he took the necessary pains, could produce variations of accepted types, or combinations of them, in almost any style he liked. It is easy to decry these imitative or eclectic productions as lacking in profundity, or as carrying on the development of themes already well-worn; and some feeling of this kind is already traceable in the very fact that so many artists deliberately chose to turn their back on the ideals of the earlier time, and to study, e.g., the 'genres' of Old Age and of mainly pathological subjects such as the anatomically exaggerated, the diseased and the deformed; and that with, apparently, no deliberate intention, as with certain works of Lionardo or Old Breughel, of composing in the grotesque manner—itself a fully Classical manner, as so many excellent red-figured Attic vases will attest. It remains, however, incontestably true that the Hellenistic artists in general were able to achieve a very remarkable degree of beauty without producing anything particularly original: so much the worse for originality, which, in any case, was never a fetish of Greek artists in any age.[1] At the same time, one must admit that, on occasion, the bolder work of this late period is extremely fine; there is no greater work, in any period, than, for instance, the magnificent heroic torso in the Vatican with which Michelangelo's name will always be associated, from the fact that, when compelled to go blindfold for a space, after the great strain of working for many months on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (lying on his back with his eyes strained upwards), it was the Master's chief and peculiar pleasure to feel the figure all over once a day.

[1] The best modern instance of really first-rate work of a not profoundly original character is probably that of our own Alfred Stevens—certainly the greatest British sculptor of whatever date, and perhaps the finest, in any country, since Michelangelo.

In the special province of portrait-sculpture, so often claimed for Rome as its particular contribution to artistic creation, the Hellenistic Age was even greater than the preceding Greek periods. Beginning with such portraits as those of Aristotle and Euripides—the latter, from its close similarity to the former, e.g. in the treatment of the hair, has of late been rightly dated to the end of the fourth century B.C.—and going on to such fine heads as that of Seleucus Nicator (now at Naples) and such splendid full-length portraits as the Heroic King in the Terme Museum, the Hellenistic Age can very well claim the position of the world's greatest period of portraiture, while for realism combined with an almost uncanny insight into character, the definitely Roman works can hardly rival the Head of a Poet in the Ephesus Room at the British Museum, that of Demosthenes—if it is not Demosthenes, it ought to be!—in the Barraco collection, and above all the amazing, almost cruelly faithful herm of Caecilius Secundus at Naples. This last, which is sometimes claimed as a Roman work, really belongs, like all the Pompeian and Herculanean discoveries, to a purely Greek artistic tradition As regards the portraits whose rigid, unbeautiful austerity and often awkward or even comical peculiarity of expression marks them as real products of the Roman practitioner, we should, of course, admit that very many of them possess considerable artistic value. They may be connected partly with the tradition of Etruscan art (itself related to the art of Greece in the same way as the art of Aragon, Catalonia, and Provence in the Quattrocento was related to Italian, particularly to Sienese, work in the previous century), partly also with the typically Roman custom of exhibiting at funerals and other special 'occasions' the wax masks of one's ancestors, made to resemble them as closely as possible. These masks were worn by persons dressed in the robes of the highest office the dead man attained to while alive: and their influence is closely com-

parable, in its effects on art, with that of Egyptian posthumous portraiture, to which reference was made in the preceding chapter.

There are two other departments of sculpture in which the Romans are often stated to have increased the resources of art, and with a certain amount of justice, although both are matters which concern rather the subject-matter of art than its real essentials: these are, respectively, the historical relief-sculpture of the Early Imperial Age, and the representation of foliage, fruit, birds and other 'natural history' subjects on tombs, altars, &c., of this same period. This latter class, it is often maintained, has no parallel in Greek art; and it is certainly true that in the classical period the Greeks produced nothing at all comparable thereto, for they confined their attention, normally, to human scenes and figures.[1] On the other hand, we know so little about the detailed development of Hellenistic Art that it would be rash to commit oneself to any negative generalization in regard to that period without a special study of all relevant monuments. The favourite example of the art of Alexandria used to be the series of sculptured panels depicting 'idyllic' scenes of country life, and people like Orpheus or the divine shepherds of fable, surrounded with wayside and woodland scenery, until A. J. B. Wace, some years ago, published a careful article in the *Annual* of the British School at Rome in which he showed good reason for supposing that the reliefs in the Palazzo Spada, a series belonging to the class of works in question, were really the work of artists in Asiatic Greece and dated from the Early Empire. But the naturalistic ornament of Greco-Roman monuments now under discussion seems to fit in well with

[1] When they used natural forms for architectural purposes they took good care to stylize them (cf. the acanthus-leaf ornament and the Corinthian capital) into such generalized shapes as seemed most suitable to the artistic purpose of the moment.

BUST OF A ROMAN

(Margam Park)

(From F. Poulsen's Greek and Roman Portraits)

these Palazzo Spada reliefs; and while the whole subject is at present quite uncertain it seems at least a little rash to assume that this particular aspect of the 'nature genre' movement was due entirely to the influence of Rome. It may have been so, but the matter requires more careful study. The spirit of the *Georgics*, in spite of the Greek parallels to which they owe so much, does indeed appear to be purely Italian, but then we have no reason to suppose that there was at the time, in Roman art, a genius of the originality and force of Virgil. The hypothesis of direct Virgilian influence need scarcely be considered: a sort of 'Pre-Raphaelite' connexion between poetry and the Fine Arts is not to be expected in Augustan Rome.

The representation of historical events in sculptured reliefs, on the other hand, does seem to be of Roman origin; not of course in the sense that Greek art never represented scenes of actual history—the Gjölbashi-Trysa reliefs and certain other Greco-Asiatic reliefs in the Nereid Room at the British Museum are instances to the contrary—but because, for the purposes of what we may almost call Imperial propaganda, a far more frequent use was made of this sort of subject than ever before, while a special technique was developed by the artists employed, e.g., on the Arch of Titus and on Trajan's Column. This technique, which we may call the 'open-air' style, attempts, not always altogether satisfactorily from the aesthetic point of view, to depict the actors in the event to be commemorated in their actual surroundings. In the reliefs on the Arch of Titus, for instance, the well-known scene of the triumphal procession of the conqueror of Jerusalem—seven-branched candlestick and all!—is shown with definite reference to the open-air surroundings of the actual procession; Trajan, again, on some slabs probably fixed originally on the Rostra, may be seen haranguing audiences in the Forum itself—in fact, these reliefs are among our most valuable pieces of evidence for the architectural

reconstruction of the Forum as it was in Imperial times; while from Trajan's Column, the completest and best instance of all, it is even possible to reconstitute the itineraries of the emperor's journeys from Ancona to the Danube, with a great many detailed events in the campaigns themselves, of which from literary sources we should be almost wholly ignorant. Here the effect of Roman conditions on the subject-matter of art, and to some extent on the actual treatment and style of the sculpture, is clear and indisputable. But whether we should be justified on this account in speaking of a separate Roman school of sculpture still remains open; it is mainly a question of definition, as has been suggested above.

When we turn to Architecture the problem is altogether different. For the details of ornament, the use of the Orders and so forth, Greek influence is of course supreme; and even if it could be proved that the Tuscan Doric and the rest of the Vitruvian system differed altogether in their proportions from the Greek practice of the Roman Age, nothing more would be established than that a few new variations, of far less importance than, for instance, the development of the Corinthian Order out of the Ionic, had been introduced at Rome into what would still remain, in all essentials, an entirely Hellenic system of design. That Rome was anything other than a centre of first-rate importance could certainly not be maintained, even if it had no further claims to consideration than those based on the many fine buildings of the character just outlined.[1] But in fact Rome's claim to have originated a

[1] They date, for the most part, from the Augustan period and later: for such Republican work as existed, apart from brick-built private dwellings of no great distinction, was oftener than not of the temporary character so familiar to us in the form of Exhibition Buildings, as for instance wooden theatres and circus-enclosures put up by victorious generals or ambitious aediles for their colossal entertainments.

new style or styles of architecture is based on far firmer grounds.[1] It was perhaps only to be expected that so sternly practical a people would take more interest in wall-building than in the ornamentation of the walls when built; and certainly, wherever it has survived, the wall-building of the later Republic and of the Augustan period—the style is exactly the same, e.g. in the substructures of the Tabularium, built by Catulus after Sulla's death, and in the Forum of Augustus—is possessed of a gigantic strength and solidity quite unlike the delicate and scientific power of Greek wall-building, and is calculated to impress the beholder with the might and majesty of its constructors. To this same class of work belong some of the most remarkable ancient monuments in nearly every country of Western Europe; the Porta Nigra at Treves on the Moselle, the Pont-du-Gard and the Theatre of Orange in the Rhone Valley, the great aqueduct at Segovia, are all admirable examples. However great one's expectation, these works never fail to surpass it in their effect of stupendous power: and as simple engineering they are masterpieces of science and skill. In the same materials we could not better them to-day. The rhetorical soul of the Romans must have gloried in these superb gestures in stone; else why did they stand their aqueducts as it were on stilts, making them stride for mile upon mile across the Campagna, or over a deep gorge, in the case of the Pont-du-Gard, when it was the constant practice of Greek engineers, from Sicily to Asia Minor and beyond, to run their water-supplies underground in the more modern and scientific manner? In these great aqueducts, these triumphal arches, these plain, vast walls made out of colossal blocks of granite or tufa—and, one may perhaps add, in these far-flung, die-straight roads, whose rigidly

[1] See also the discussion in the following section whether Rome or the East played the greater part in the origination of the Byzantine and other early medieval styles.

perfect alignment and ordered complication still stare at us from the road-maps of France and England—we may surely trace the direct and unfettered expression of Rome's national character, no less than in the growling thunder of an Ennius and the miraculous lightning-veined blackness of a Lucretius. There is an epic quality about these men's constructions, to which, by a fortunate chance, perfect literary expression has been given in the hexameter engraved upon the Tagus bridge which gives its name to Alcantara in Estremadura:

> Pontem perpetui mansurum in saecula mundi
> Fecit divina nobilis arte Lacer.

The builder's boast that his work will be eternal shows as yet no sign of being falsified; like Horace and Shakespeare, he has wrought a work that seems destined to outlast time itself.

IV. *The Later Empire and the Coming of the Middle Ages*

For three whole centuries, beginning from Julius Caesar's conquest of Gaul and foundation of the monarchy, the Roman Empire continued unimpaired, its armies holding in safety the distant frontiers, on the Rhine and Danube and in farthest Armenia, within which the provincial populations, whose free members all received the full Roman citizenship by the famous 'Constitutio Antoniniana' soon after A.D. 200, grew gradually more and more thoroughly civilized. Hellenistic culture in the East and Greco-Roman culture in the West absorbed into their spheres of influence alike the half-Greek peoples of Asia Minor, Syria, &c., and the old Celtic or Iberian tribes of the north and west. With the Celts, whether in Gaul or on the Danube (for the 'Alpine Foreland' and the plains of Western Hungary were mainly inhabited by Celts at the time of the Roman conquest), this process was

RUINS OF A TEMPLE AT BAALBEK

(*From Th. Wiegand, Baalbek, vol. ii*)

especially easy and rapid, since, besides their close ethnic connexion with the Italic-speaking nations south of the Apennines, these mid-European tribes had been, during the centuries after about 500 B.C., the possessors of a very notable and far more than local culture of their own, the 'La Tène' civilization of the Early Iron Age. They were, in fact, at least as civilized in most respects as the Romans themselves in the third and second centuries B.C.; and from the great Greek colony of Marseilles the inhabitants of South and Central Gaul had received, ever since its foundation in 600 B.C., quite a considerable amount of Hellenic influence. This influence may be traced not only in the extremely fine architecture and sculpture of Provence in the Imperial period, but also, very possibly, in that most interesting and too little appreciated 'false dawn' of the Renaissance which appeared in this same region about the twelfth century A.D.[1]—just at the time when the troubadours were inventing the forms of Provençal poetry from which later European poetry derived all those of its metres which are not of Hellenic origin.

Until the year A.D. 276, in spite of civil wars and occasional barbarian irruptions, the defences of the empire proved sufficient, on the whole, to withstand the ever-increasing strain imposed upon them by pressure from the Germanic and other tribes of northern and eastern Europe. Hadrian's organization of the frontiers, with legionary camps as centres of resistance at a large number of points on the Rhine and Danube, had proved amply sufficient to cope with the circumstances for which they had been planned. But when the strong but narrow

[1] The porch of the cathedral at Avignon, with its purely classical detail arranged in a most original manner, is perhaps the most striking of these twelfth-century Renaissance works. But for Innocent III and his terrible persecution of the 'Albigensian' protestants, some Provençal architect might have anticipated Brunelleschi's great work—which is *not* the dome at Florence—by a couple of centuries.

frontier barrier—'Hadrian's Line' one may call it—broke down at last there was no immediate possibility of organizing further resistance, and in 276 the enormously prosperous and well-cultivated cities and fields of Gaul were delivered, helpless and defenceless, to the mercies of the invading Alemanni (that being the name of the most prominent of the plundering tribes); and, as it were in a moment, one-fifth of the empire was completely and utterly ruined. Everywhere the fields were ravaged and the population slaughtered, the cities burnt down and the whole complicated machinery of administration suddenly brought to an end. When the barbarians had melted away, as such violent invaders usually do, the land was partly brought back into cultivation and the cities were gradually rebuilt, in a very much smaller area. For their walls the fire-scorched fragments of earlier buildings, tombs, reliefs, bits of houses and temples were piled together, in immensely solid uncemented masses of masonry, from which, in many cases, these same fragments have been carefully sought out by archaeologists, who have been able from them to reconstruct a great deal of the glories of Gaulish-Roman civilization before the disaster. The prosperity of Gaul was, to some extent, revived in the fourth century; but the Roman government never again established itself in the old way, and the organization of the Christian Church, now the empire's official religion, very largely took its place.

But the Roman civilization of the fourth and fifth centuries was most strangely different from that of the early empire. It is as though another race, with an altogether different stock of ideas and methods, had come upon the scene. An enormous and vitally important change, contemporary with but (possibly) unrelated to the victory of Christianity, had transformed the spirit of Roman government, of the arts, and of life itself. The empire had, indeed, passed through a period of torment and convulsion, for

when the Aleman was ravaging Gaul the central power can hardly be said to have been in existence, and in the east as well as in the north the Roman government appeared to have broken down for good. The great Illyrian emperors, Aurelian and Diocletian above all, succeeded, by a miracle of military energy and endurance and the most consummate statecraft, in re-establishing the rule of the State, both in the east and in the west; but it was a very different State from that of Augustus or of the Antonines. From top to bottom it had been converted into a medieval, caste-bound autocracy. The emperors, from Diocletian down, were hedged about with that quasi-oriental state and almost superstitious awe that still casts its glamour, or did until the late war, about an emperor and his court. Their subjects, with the decrease of the amount of coined money in circulation (due largely, it would appear, to the drain of gold and silver to the East, in payment for the luxuries of India and China), had gone back in most respects to the pre-monetary stage of economics—even the army, in this period, was paid mostly 'in kind'. The only part of the earlier Greco-Roman system which survived the great change was the power of the bureaucracy, which was all the more oppressive as the area over which it could exercise its corrupt control grew gradually less in extent. But law, the one really enormous contribution of the Roman system to western progress, also remained. For, in the later days of the empire, while the emperor, in theory, was master of the law, even he was, in practice, controlled by it to an extent undreamt of in the monarchies (Assyrian, Greek, Persian, or Parthian) of earlier ages. Throughout the Dark Ages, between the fifth and eleventh centuries, the empire, then including (as a rule) only Asia Minor and the Balkan peninsula, with certain coastal regions of Italy and Sicily, remained the one stable and prosperous civilized state in a chaotic world; and the secret of its stability was the permanence of the reign of law.

The Fine Arts, as has been said, changed in this same period no less fundamentally than the political and social aspects of life. This is true more especially of painting and sculpture—in architecture the change came rather later and was of a less powerful kind. For a thousand years painting and sculpture had taken truth to nature as an indispensable condition of high achievement. Each painter or sculptor or gem-cutter followed, it is true, the traditional method of representation, indeed, the whole scheme of design of his immediate masters; but, within the limits thus laid down, he strove continually to bring both the details of the objects depicted and also their general appearance more and more closely into line with natural truth. That in selecting his materials (choosing his models and so forth) the artist of classic Greece or Rome tried, as a rule, to develop the ideal type of his subject, usually the human figure, or some arrangement based on that, presents no difficulty whatever: the normal, i.e. the best of its type (not, of course, the average) is, on any sound theory of beauty in the created world, the most truly natural—or so, at least, the Greeks believed. But in the art of the fourth century A.D., after a period of extreme standardization at the end of the Antonine Age and a further period which can best be described as anarchic, we suddenly find a new style appearing, and an altogether new outlook on art. In the 'anarchic' period—as we can see it, e.g. in the later works of Gallo-Roman art in the Treves Museum—the Naturalists had been seized with a sort of mad frenzy; 'representation' had given place to a violently emotional style, hair was expressed in heaving, surging clots and lumps, eyes were hollowed deep into the head, until these excesses brought the old, slowly developed, and painfully built structure to an end.

The new art which took its place produced many fine things—many of the portraits of Constantine the Great, his contemporaries, and his successors show great vigour

of expression and boldness of character-drawing; while somewhat crude, over-simplified, apparently archaic marble or ivory reliefs of the earliest Byzantine period often possess a very definite charm of their own, especially when we compare them with the generally rather uninteresting relief-sculpture of, say, the Antonine Age—those same sarcophagi, in fact, which were mentioned in the preceding chapter as having afterwards exercised so unfortunate an influence on the Pisan and Florentine sculptors of the Early Renaissance. Whether some similar distaste for the monotony of the increasingly mannered 'Greco-Roman' style was felt by the artists who started the new style, we cannot say. It is perhaps more likely that, in the economic chaos which overwhelmed most parts of the civilized world at the end of the third century, the classes upon whose patronage the sculptors depended sank into poverty without leaving any *nouveau riche* successors imbued with similar tastes. Certain it is that, in Rome itself, the art of figure-sculpture did actually die out at about this very period; as may be seen by a casual inspection of the Arch of Constantine, whose constructors went so far as to pillage earlier monuments to provide themselves with the best of their relief-sculpture. The striking contrast between these earlier works and the fourth-century reliefs higher up on the arch is exceedingly illuminating. At the same time the arch itself, as an architectural design, is perhaps the finest in Rome; and this favourable impression is reinforced by a study of the other buildings of this and the following period—such as the superb 'Basilica of Constantine' (really the work of his defeated rival Maxentius), the Baptistery of San Giovanni Laterano, and the incomparably majestic Basilican church of San Paolo Fuori le Mura.

It is a strange phenomenon, this sudden collapse of sculpture accompanied (or followed) by a recrudescence of power in architecture. But though they are hard to

account for, there can be no doubt at all about the facts. The Roman buildings of the age of Diocletian and Constantine are among the finest of all; and their style, though new in some ways, is nevertheless in the clearest sense classical. On the constructive side their architecture goes back without a break to the period of the early empire: they consist, as a rule, of great masses of brickwork bound together by the wonderful Roman cement. A good example of this same kind of construction, from the Augustan Age, is the portion of Agrippa's Thermae still visible at the back of the Pantheon; one can see better there than almost anywhere else how the decorative marble-work was laid upon the 'concrete' core, and this should be remembered as a commentary on the hackneyed quotation that Augustus 'found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble'.

Whether this whole style of construction was really of Roman origin is hard to say, though it is usual to assume this. We must remember, however, that Alexandria and other great Hellenistic cities may have contained buildings very like those of Imperial Rome. For what it is worth, we have the information (from Posidonius, a very good authority) that Thermae originated at Antioch in Syria; but we do not know how they were built there.[1]

[1] Of the architectural style predominant in these great Greek cities in the East we still know almost nothing, although excavations, in the near future, may tell us much. There is, however, a valuable hint in Chapter I of the *Alexandrine War* (preserved with Caesar's *Civil Wars*, but by another author), from which it seems fair to infer that what we regard as the characteristically Roman architecture of the Imperial Age may be really a transplantation of Hellenistic methods and models: Alexandria is stated to be 'practically fireproof, since the buildings have no (wooden) flooring or other timber construction, but are made firm by (brick ?) walls and vaulting—*structuris et fornicibus continentur*—and the roofing is of concrete or mosaic work'. We may recall the fact that the architect of Trajan's forum at Rome was Apollodorus of Damascus.

The palace erected for Diocletian in his retirement, in the neighbourhood of Salona—the medieval town which was burrowed out of that great Villa kept and still keeps the name of Spalato (officially Split)—is the finest example of this last efflorescence of classical art. The finest part of the whole palace is the tomb built for the emperor—one of the great persecutors, whose ghost revisiting the place must surely suffer the keenest possible penance, when he realizes that it is used as a Christian cathedral. But other portions are almost as fine, for example the domed Vestibule and the 'Peristyle', a very good instance of novelty in a classic style, with its rows of arches imposed on the capitals of Corinthian columns, instead of the normal flat architrave. Classical art, in architecture at least, was very much alive when these great monuments were built, for to be able to innovate beautifully without altering the general type of art is surely the mark of a living style.

With the beginnings of Byzantine Art, the great new, non-Classical style of Asiatic Greece—using the domed church as its principal unit, instead of the old Hellenic gabled and pillared temple—we cannot deal in the present chapter. Nor can we follow the Basilican Style (based perhaps, originally, on the great public halls of the Hellenistic monarchs, imitated at Rome for the law-courts and for other large buildings of the later Republican and early Imperial periods) into its later developments, the Basilican churches of the Romanesque period in the north and west, and the Saracenic style in the east and south. It must suffice to indicate the present writer's view that these various styles, including the Byzantine, ought properly to be classed under some such general heading as Mediterranean Medieval Style, rather than split up into Late Roman or European and Byzantine-Saracenic or Oriental. That the Hellenistic, Greco-Roman, and Byzantine architects learned much from the native buildings of Syria and Mesopotamia is probably true; that any pre-

Greek element was strong enough to be properly considered as the one essential or predominant feature of any of those styles remains, it is submitted, to be proved. The question, in any case, falls somewhat outside the limits of the present chapter.

But it is within the scope of any study of Classical Art in the ancient world to consider whether, in the great works of the Constantinian Age (apart from the beginnings of the Byzantine Style), any considerable 'oriental' influence can be traced. The great Adam, the first student of Spalato in relatively recent times, was content to accept the prima facie view that we have here a supremely great example of pure classical style. And this view is still maintained with great vigour and talent by one school of 'art historians', of whom Rivoira is the champion and principal authority. But Professor Strzygowski, with very remarkable power and with immense learning, maintains exactly the opposite view. The masterly work of Mr. O. M. Dalton on *East Christian Art* contains a careful and admirably balanced account of both views. The question is not one which can be easily settled; influences, it is clear, came and went all over the empire, and the 'orientalizing' theorists, interesting as their views are, may quite conceivably be no less misguided than those savants who, not so many years ago, sought to explain the origin of the Hellenic art as a process of influence or borrowings from Semitic Tyre and Sidon. Adam, in the present writer's opinion, was probably right in claiming Spalato as purely classical; but the *mirage oriental* dies hard.

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VI

THE ART OF ASIA

By Laurence Binyon

The art of Asia presents the only other body of mature art in the world which may be compared on equal terms with the art of Europe. It is not only a fascinating field of study in itself, but it has this additional interest that it throws into relief the contrasted character of European art. We are apt to take for granted much in Western art, as in Western civilization, because it belongs to so great a human tradition and is common to all the nations with whose history, art, and literature we are most familiar: but when we contemplate the art of Asia we begin to discover that European art is not the only great art in the world, that in certain respects this other art is a silent comment and criticism on our own art, and through that on our own civilization.

I have used the phrase 'the art of Asia': and you may perhaps be surprised that I should speak of the art of that vast continent as if it had a unity of character and could be spoken of as a whole. I think it has that unity, in spite of great divergences among the various races and schools among which it has been produced. In this art at any rate India, Persia, China, Japan, and the other Far-Eastern countries are united by currents of actual influence; and there are certain features which the arts of all these lands have in common. The art of Persia, like the art of Japan, though to a lesser degree, cannot be truly understood without reference to the art of China. And when we begin to study the art of China, we soon discover how much of Indian inspiration lies behind its creations.

I shall endeavour to trace the main currents of these influences by showing you some characteristic examples

from the arts of these countries. But first let us recall a momentous event in human history which has left a deep impress on the life of both Europe and Asia; the conquest of Alexander. There have been few more significant moments in the world than that when the Greek conqueror, radiant in his youth, his beauty, and the splendour of his achievements, burst on that ancient, teeming, meditative world of India. The spirit of the West and the spirit of the East encountered each other for the first time. Alexander conquered; but his conquest was of materials only. The Indian mind refused to be impressed. The Olympic games, the Attic stage, were presented by the conqueror as a spectacle of the glory of Greece before this Eastern world. The Brahmans were indifferent or disdainful. Why this exaltation of the human body, the irksome and transitory lodging of the spirit? or of human action and human passion, both equally disturbing to the ideal life of contemplation? Here already, in an extreme form, we meet with a contrast in the conception of life and the universe which we shall find again and again expressed in Asian art. To the West, man is the hero of existence, the centre of the universe; in him the divine is revealed; and in Western art the nude human body is the supreme means of expression, the most significant of all symbols. In the East, man is but one link in an infinite and continuous chain of existences; and in the most typical works of the mature art of Asia man is set against a vast background in which he takes his place but which he does not dominate.

It is curious to note that whereas we have come to realize the continuity of life through the universe, our kinship with everything that lives, through the long and gradual discoveries of science, what is most remarkable in the civilizations of Asia is the absence of science and the scientific spirit. In China the most marvellous refinement and the most subtle intuition are found side by side with the most fantastic superstitions.

Most of us do not realize how integral a part science has played in the history of our art. The Italian Renaissance studied anatomy and perspective as sciences and then applied them to painting. The tradition still continues. And it is a common misconception in Europe to assume that art develops in the same way as science. Throughout Western art we find a continual emphasis on the relief and solidity of objects and a constant endeavour to present them as they appear in nature. Chiaroscuro has been studied as a means to enforce this sense of illusion, though in great masters like Rembrandt and Correggio light and shade are rightly used to an artistic end alone, namely, the expression of emotion.

Now in all the countries of Asia you will never find a painter putting in a cast shadow, unless he has been influenced from Europe. Nor do these painters emphasize modelling and relief. They achieve an effect of reality, but by different means. Their art is less tied to materials. Their pictures are painted from memory, enriched by long and patient observation. They do not imitate surfaces and textures. They concentrate on character, movement, expression. They have never made the representation of a scene the primary end of art. Rather it is harmony and rhythm which is their ideal aim.

But enough of generalizations. Let us take a glance, inevitably a very hurried glance, at the actual art itself. My time being so strictly limited I have felt obliged to leave out architecture, sculpture, and all the so-called minor arts, and to confine myself almost entirely to painting.

A complete survey of the field would, of course, include the monumental art of Assyria and ancient Persia, as seen in the imposing sculptures still preserved. But of these I shall say nothing, partly for lack of space, partly also because these creations of antiquity have had no such direct and vital influence on the later art of Asia as the

classic art of antiquity has had on European tradition. Roughly we may take as our starting-point a date corresponding to the Christian era.

What was the state of Asia in the first century A.D.?

Just as the history of European art is bound up with the history of Christianity, so the history of Asian art, at least of the Farther East, is bound up with the history of Buddhism. The genius of the West is incarnate in that magnificent march of Alexander over burning deserts, frozen mountains, and rushing rivers. The genius of the East is embodied in the not less triumphant progress of Buddhism out of India, across the Central Asian deserts to China and Japan. Buddhism died out of India, but it gave an enduring inspiration to the thought and the art of all the Farther East. It may seem to us, viewing it from outside, a creed of negation and despair of life; in actual practice it has sown the seeds of compassion, good will, and charity, not only towards human beings but towards all living things, and has been infinitely fruitful in the creation of art.

The invasion of Alexander, who had passed through Persia and Bactria into the valley of the Indus, had indirectly brought about the creation of a strong central power in India: and the conversion of the great Indian Emperor Asoka to Buddhism was of vast importance for the history of the whole of Asia. Hellenic influence also had been brought far into the Asian Continent. It took no vital hold, and was soon an ebbing tide. But Alexander's conquest set free a great current of various activities between East and West. Right from China to the Mediterranean stretched the high road along which the precious silks were brought by traders to the markets of Imperial Rome. The two great ports of traffic at the western end were Antioch and Alexandria: and from these cities the fermenting ideas of the period, the new cults and religious speculations with which it was so rife, were carried into

the heart of Asia. During the first Christian centuries the Central Asian region was a kind of whirlpool of religious thought. The mystical doctrine of the Gnostics, as well as Christianity proper, spread from Alexandria eastward, meeting the faith of Zoroaster in Persia and the full tide of Buddhism in its outward triumphant flow from India. Mani, a Persian, attempted in the second century A.D. to form a new religion, Manichaeism, fusing the vital elements of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Buddhism into a single world-religion. And with this deep stirring of religious thought arose a manifold activity in art.

A winged angel is one of a series of lunettes painted about the third century on the wall of a Buddhist shrine built in the desert within the borders of Chinese Turkestan.[1] And yet the painting is thoroughly Western in style, in feeling, in sense of form! We are reminded at once of the few remaining relics of classical painting in Europe; we are reminded of the late Greek portraits found on mummy-cases in Egypt, with their large prominent eyes and broad vigorous outline. And yet in this same shrine are painted groups of Buddha and his disciples, and scenes from the Buddha legend. Well, strange as it may seem, there can be little doubt that the painter of these frescoes was a citizen of the Roman Empire—a Syrian perhaps from Asia Minor who had carried his art, derived from Hellenistic tradition, into the borders of the Chinese Empire; on one of the frescoes he has signed his name, Tita, a variant probably of the Roman Titus.

Such evidence as this might lead us, and has already led some theorists, to the conclusion that Western art, penetrating so far into Asia, provided the art of that continent with material to work upon and with its first dominant inspiration.

But in truth the evidence supports no conclusion of the kind. The painter of these angel frescoes was plainly not

[1] M. A. Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. i, Plate IV.

in sympathy with the world of thought which he was commissioned to express. His treatment of the Buddha figure is entirely unimpressive. If we compare for a moment any work of the mature art of Asia with these frescoes, we can find no point of connexion between them.

A like theory of Greek inspiration being at the source of Asian sculpture was propounded by various scholars when the sculpture of Gandhara was first brought to light. Gandhara was a small kingdom outside the north-west of India; and there a school of sculptors, working about the first century in a late Hellenistic tradition, attempted to create images of Buddha and his legend in response to the fervour of Buddhist faith, which, arriving from India, had seized on the people of Gandhara. But here again it is the same story. Art works from within. It may borrow externals; but it is the spirit within which moulds it. Something of bodily grace, something in the folds of drapery, remains in the Buddhist art of China and Japan as a legacy from far-off Greece; but that is all.[1]

We have literary evidence that in India as in China the art of painting on the walls of palaces was practised at least some centuries B.C. There still exist in India, in Orissa, paintings on the walls of a cave which date from the second century B.C. The technique of these frescoes, with strong outline and the use of colours confined to red and black on white, reminds one of the earliest paintings known to us, the prehistoric paintings found in Spain and south-western France.

The traditions of craftsmanship in the East are fixed and persistent. Everywhere in India, in Turkestan, in China, in Japan, we find the same method of fresco-painting on lime with a strong expressive outline and clear colouring. It corresponds to what is known of the earlier type of painting in Greece itself. The presumption of an early Asiatic style of painting diffused as widely as the shores of

[1] Buddha (Apollo-type). Lahore Museum.

the Mediterranean is one that is likely to win general acceptance. It was from this primitive style, we may presume, that the various countries of Asia developed each a national style of art, always, however, retaining a common base of character.

In the greatest series of early Indian frescoes which are still preserved art has become mature.

In a remote ravine among the mountains of Haiderabad a great scarp of precipitous rock sweeps in a horseshoe curve above a stream. It is a place of solitary and wild beauty

All along the surface of the cliff the rock has been hollowed out into what are often called caves but are really spacious halls elaborately hewn in imitation of actual structure. There are twenty-nine of these, four being churches, the rest monastery dwellings. Many of them contain paintings. These frescoes are not all of one date; the earliest are, perhaps, of the first century A.D., the latest and finest of the seventh century.

These paintings are all Buddhist in subject. We are apt to associate Buddhist art with a hieratic character; with paintings and statues of the mystical Bodhisattvas, apparitions from the supernatural world; with an art that has no concern with the actual and the visible. But the most characteristic of the Ajanta frescoes have for subject the stories told of the lives of the Buddha in his previous incarnations on earth. And so we find portrayed before our eyes the actual life of the India of that time.

In a palace interior[1] where pillars of deep red are crowned by capitals of pale blue marble, a prince is seated receiving offerings from young girls. How full of natural grace and courtesy are their attitudes and movements! We have no need to make excuses for a primitive stage of art. All is largely designed, with an easy mastery over the means of representation. Others again are outdoor scenes.

[1] *Ajanta Frescoes*, published by the India Society, Plate XIII.

There is a scene from the story which afterwards wandered to Europe and became the well-known legend of St. Hubert,[1] the huntsman who followed a stag which turned to show him a crucifix planted between its antlers. In the Indian story it is a certain king, frantically enamoured of the chase, who pursues a deer headlong, leaving his courtiers behind him, till he falls into a pit full of water which he had not noticed in his haste. The deer takes pity on him and pulls him out, and so transforms his nature. The freshness and animation of this scene, with its thickets of green, so admirably suggested, and the many moving figures, remind one of paintings by Pisanello. But the all-embracing tenderness of Buddhism, its recognition of the dignity and patience and beauty of the life outside humanity, gives to these scenes an atmosphere very different from that of any mere hunting-scene. The deer itself is the being who was afterwards to be born as the Buddha.

Another story is of the great white elephant, also an incarnation of the Buddha.[2] Owing to a spite conceived in a former existence, a young queen desired to rob this king of elephants of his tusks, and sent a hunter to procure them. The hunter, after surmounting incredible obstacles, found his victim, but was unable to saw off the tusks himself. The elephant then took the saw in his trunk and cut them off himself, knowing well why and for whom the thing was done. The prize was brought home to the queen; but she, at last perceiving her own littleness of soul and the Buddha's magnanimity, turned away in shame from the sacrifice she had thought to enjoy, and allowed herself to die. The group of the dying queen surrounded by her attendants is one of the most beautifully conceived in this whole series of frescoes, or, indeed, in the whole of Indian art. We note, too, the masterly drawing of the elephant.

The characteristic spirit of compassion flowing out for

[1] Ibid., Plate VIII. [2] Ibid., Plate XXVII.

all living creatures, which gives a singular gentleness to all these scenes, a gentleness felt even in the drawing of the figures—this spirit finds its culmination in a superhuman figure[1] which is the supreme expression of the art of Ajanta. No one certainly knows whom this figure represents; whether Gautama renouncing the world, or (more probably) the great Bodhisattva, the genius of compassion, Avalokitesvara, who is said to refuse salvation till the salvation of the whole world is accomplished. Of superhuman size, among a confused multitude of smaller shapes, variously occupied, and a background of rocky ledge and tree, this great form stands out detached as a spirit looking down in pity on all the world.

In these Ajanta frescoes we find an abounding and inexhaustible delight in life—in the beauty of form and movement in men and women and animals, in the freshness of leaves, in the earth and the sunshine. And yet in the midst of this joyous exuberance, the natural vigour and hope of youth, there is the capacity for profound sorrow and an exalted compassion. The secret of this art is a deep recognition of the spiritual element in man, conceived not as an essence apart, to be cloistered and protected from the material world, but as something pervading and refining all the actions and events in which men and women take part, and colouring with its own tinge even the unconscious life of Nature.

These frescoes have the same kind of significance and promise for the art of Asia that the early Italian frescoes have for the art of Europe. If inferior in some aspects, especially in design, they are superior in one aspect: they are not so exclusively occupied with human figures, they admit refreshingly the world of animals and vegetation. Animals and birds are painted with more mastery because with more sympathy and insight.[2]

From a morning of such magnificent promise what might

[1] *Ajanta Frescoes*, Plate XI. [2] Ibid., Plate XX.

NIZAMI ILLUMINATION, 1539-43

(*British Museum*)

BODHISATTVA: AJANTA FRESCO

(*Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington*)

we not expect? But alas! the story of Indian painting so nobly begun drops into centuries of total darkness. No doubt the practice of painting continued: it reappears again in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; no doubt there has been immense destruction by the Mohammedans; but for close on a thousand years, so far as anything is known at present, we have an astounding gap and silence. Buddhist art was not to die; it was to flourish exceedingly in Central Asia, in China, in Japan, in Tibet. But in the land of its birth it died out.

Some writers have professed to find in the frescoes of Ajanta traces of Chinese and Persian influence. If such be recognized they are so little important as to be insignificant. Chinese art of the same period was, as we shall see, of a quite different character of drawing and design. Persian figures appear in one of the scenes, but we really know almost nothing about contemporary Persian painting. Persia under the Sassanian dynasty, which was overthrown by the conquering Arabs in A.D. 642, had no doubt a flourishing art. The decorative designs which it preferred largely influenced the textiles of Central Asia; and the products of Sassanian craftsmanship were prized in China and Japan; some fine works in metal of this period have survived, but nothing of the figure painting. Persian painting as we know it begins in the Middle Ages, after the conquest of Persia by the Mongols. To that we shall come later.

The advancing tide of Buddhism, sweeping northward and eastward and carrying in its wake a rich store of Indian imagery, arrived at last in China. There it met a race which had already a vigorous art of its own. All representations of the Buddha legends, which the Ajanta frescoes illustrate in a character so entirely Indian, were not only treated by the Chinese artists in their own manner, but the personages were portrayed as Chinese, not only in type and feature but in every detail of cos-

tume. This convention once fixed was adhered to and never abandoned, even in Japan. Sakyamuni has become a Chinese prince, in purely Chinese surroundings. As China became more familiar with Buddhist symbolism and with the actual images brought from Khotan and Gandhara and India itself, and as the later Buddhist doctrine, with its worship of the great Bodhisattvas, began to supersede the simpler primitive teaching of Buddha, Chinese artists eagerly assimilated the forms and symbols of the conquering faith. What they borrowed was, however, always subdued to the genius and idiom of their own art.

What was the character, then, and what were the dominant features, of the native Chinese art? Apart from bronze vessels and incense-burners dating from various centuries B.C. there is very little of Chinese art surviving before the advent of Buddhism. One of the chief monuments is a series of low reliefs on a tomb in Shantung.[1] These sculptures date from the second century A.D. We do not know precisely what the subjects mean. But we seem to be in presence of a race of great original energy and vitality, especially in the lowest frieze, where two figures are striking at a serpent which has seized a third and is strangling him. Though these reliefs seem to be transcripts from paintings, we have a strong impression of mass. But the masses are never immobile and inert, there is a strong sense of movement whether actual or latent. If one had to characterize this art in the briefest manner, one might say that it was especially distinguished by the feeling for volume and momentum. This power of expressing movement and also the fullness of life within the outline of a form persists throughout Chinese art.

When we come to painting, we find another characteristic element. The Chinese write with a brush; and painting in their view is not only intimately allied with writing, but is reckoned as actually a branch of writing. We possess

[1] E. Chavannes, *Mission Archéologique dans la Chine*, Plate LXI.

recently discovered letters of the first century A.D., and these indicate as much mastery of the brush as any later writing. From a people trained from childhood to write expressively and sensitively the strokes of the intricate Chinese characters, we should expect that their painting would, even in primitive times of art, show a high skill in the manipulation of the brush. The painting attributed to Ku K'ai-Chih in the British Museum may or may not be an original work; but the fineness and subtlety of the 'handwriting', to use a term quite appropriate in speaking of Chinese art, are, I think, in themselves no ground for judging it to belong to a later date. Ku K'ai-Chih was a famous Chinese master of the fourth century A.D.[1] Instead of the impression of mass, proper to sculpture and its material, the fine writing line on the smooth silk is used to express human character with singularly subtlety and intensity. Even thus early we arrive at the sense of intimacy and refinement which only comes to a ripe art, and we feel convinced that a long tradition must lie behind work so sensitive and mature. There is no trace whatever of Indian influence in this picture or in the picture attributed to the same master which passed some years ago from the most famous of Chinese collections into that of the late Mr. Freer, now at Washington. Mr. Freer's picture is of gods and goddesses, and is remarkable for its expressive rendering of swift and buoyant movement in delicate, nervous line. It is certain that, whatever the actual date of these pictures, they represent the style of the fourth century. Now Ku K'ai-Chih, we know, painted Buddhist pictures. What these were like we cannot tell; but at any rate his art as we know it is essentially and entirely Chinese. The native tradition of painting in China, then, had for one of its chief characteristics a beauty of handwriting, a power of modulating the strokes

[1] Makimono attributed to Ku K'ai-Chih, published by the British Museum.

of the brush and making them expressive of the artist's nature, the intensity and force of his spirit. Such an art as this readily allies itself with the instinct for communicating the sense of movement. The great draughtsmen of Europe have for the most part been distinguished by their searching grasp of structure and their power of suggesting roundness and mass. They have seconded their powers by close studies of anatomy. The Chinese recall rather exceptional artists like Botticelli, with whom the love of sinuous rhythmical line is an inborn passion, and whose instinct for representing movement became at last a mannerism. The love of movement—continuous movement—which pervades Chinese art is the outcome of a certain attitude of mind and philosophy of life. If you wish to seize the spirit of the Chinese genius you cannot do better than read the sayings and paradoxes of Lao-tzŭ, the great sage who was contemporary with Confucius and almost with Buddha too.

The conviction that life consists of change, that without change and without movement there is no life, this conviction seems to be ever present in Chinese art, underlying even its chosen patterns of decoration.

The decorative ornament of the West is mostly of a static character. It is made up of stable forms, and relies on the principle of symmetry. Persian and Indian ornament are not, perhaps, essentially different from this. But Chinese decoration, with its recurring motives of cloud and wave and sinuous dragons, takes the most fluid elements for its matter and imparts to its patterns a vibration as of things alive.

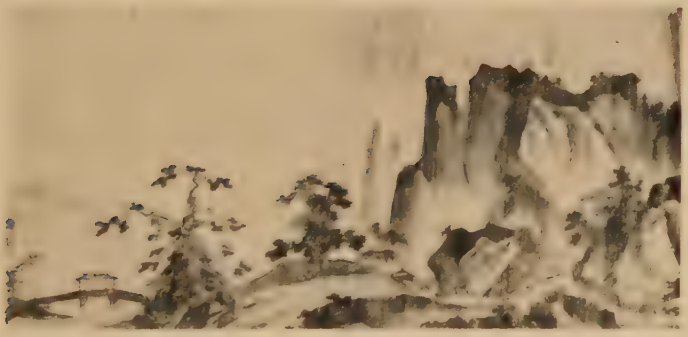
Indian thought, like Chinese thought, is full of the fact of change and impermanence in everything, including human personality.

But while the Indian spirit accepts the fact with resignation, and pines always for a place of rest from the endless chain of existence, the Chinese spirit seems rather to be

FAMILY GROUP

Portion of Ku K'ai-Chih Roll

(*British Museum*)



PORTION OF MA YAN YUAN LANDSCAPE ROLL

(*Freer Collection, Washington*)

exhilarated by the consciousness that every life is part of the streaming, ever-changing energy of the universe.

I show you a drawing[1] which is very likely a copy from a large wall-painting of the T'ang period (seventh to tenth centuries); and here the conviction of an energy of movement as the essence of life is vividly expressed. We seem transported into a world of stream and flow, where elemental creatures move untrammelled by corporeal weight, yet endowed with superhuman force. The subject is from an old Chinese folk-tale of demons that fight with animals. We talk of demonic energy; and here surely that phrase is embodied to the life. A gust of electric storm seems to sweep through the whole design and to carry us along with it.

My next illustration[1] is a drawing from the same series. The same peculiar gift which we saw in a primitive form in the relief of the Han period is here displayed to the utmost capacity. Though only line is used, nothing could surpass the power and momentum of these figures. And now the beasts and reptiles, carved with rude vigour by the early sculptor on the stone, are drawn with a brush of supreme mastery. Leonardo could not have surpassed them.

In comparing these with Indian drawings we feel at once the inborn superiority of the Chinese genius for design. I mean that faculty which creates from the pictorial elements it uses an organic unity, holding the parts in equilibrium. Balance is the pivot of art, says Rodin, and in the attainment of balance the Chinese have not been rivalled by any other race. Through this balance of organic unity even the stormiest and most violent forms can be held as in a charmed repose; and this repose is what we miss most often in Indian design, grandiose and fecund as it is, and rich in particular beauties.

[1] F. R. Martin, *Zeichnungen nach Wu-Tao Tze* (1913), Plates XLIV and L. It has not been found practicable to reproduce here all the illustrations referred to in the lecture.

As Chinese art develops it gradually invents a system of spacing which is quite new in the art of the world, and unique, although carried out with special variations by the Japanese who inherited it.[1] The next examples shown will illustrate my meaning better than words. Whatever China has borrowed from outside (and probably, like most original races and original talents, she has borrowed much), this genius for spacing remains her own and is of the indestructible essence of her art. It is the miraculous faculty of design, that without recourse to symbol it can take the simplest of living things and convert them from fact into idea, so that we no longer see merely the object represented, but are somehow admitted with seeing eyes into the mystery of life itself, the something sacred at the heart of things which appeals to what is profoundest in ourselves. Something in us of which we were not conscious, far below the surface of our intelligence, comes up into the light.

With all their genius for design, which pervades the whole of their art, the Chinese did not spend themselves on abstract problems of decoration, but kept their design animated and nourished by an intimate observation of Nature. And this was not mere observation for its own sake, it was prompted by an impassioned love of all that has most power to liberate and enchant our spirits in the world without: the miracle of flowers for ever springing and fading, the passage of the moon, the purity of the snow, the airy motion of birds, the endurance and the vastness of the mountains. So the landscape art of China, in all its various phases, remains in richness and poetic depth of mood unsurpassed even now.

The age of Sung (tenth to thirteenth centuries) from which I take these examples, was an age in which Buddhism had coalesced with the doctrines of the great Chinese sage, Lao-tzŭ, the contemporary and rival of Con-

[1] Geese. Sung Period. British Museum.

fucius, to create a certain school or sect called the sect of Contemplation. And the peculiar ideals of this sect inspired much of the art of the Sung era.

The more imaginative minds of China lived in reaction from the Confucian system with its ideals of social order and service. Their ideal was personal and intellectual freedom. The sect of Contemplation treated ceremony and ritual, sacred images, and even sacred scriptures as valueless in themselves. On one side it resembled Puritanism, but with nothing of Puritan moroseness. On the contrary, the human spirit was to cultivate a blithe unworldiness, to ally itself with the freedom and fluidity of winds and streams and birds and flowers. Beauty was sought and found in the most trivial acts, the humblest occupations. And so in art no subject was thought too slight, if seen with the true vision. A bird on a bough, a spray of flowering plum, or bamboo trembling in the wind, could be as significant to the spirit as the forms of deity or angel.

It was in landscape art that this era found its supreme expression. Of all themes for the painter's brush landscape was esteemed the first; for how could the part be greater than the whole? Landscape included man and all his works, together with all the life of animals, of birds and fishes, as of trees and flowers.

You know how different has been the conception of landscape in Europe; how late its growth, how timid its beginnings. For long no artist ventured to paint a landscape without the excuse of some human incident to form its nominal motive. And, till the nineteenth century, nature was rarely admitted into art but as providing an agreeable background, where every extra-human existence had for its object the ministering to human needs and human pleasures. It was with a devastating sense of disillusion that science at last in the nineteenth century brought home to man his true place in the universe. There is an impressive prose-poem of Turgenev's in which Man

confronts in some central cave of earth the brooding spirit of Nature. He sees the preoccupation on her brow and asks eagerly and confidently what new triumphs, what new glory, she is preparing for his destiny. She interrupts her thought to answer him. She is not thinking of him at all. Some little equilibrium in her vast economy has been disturbed; she is seeking for a device to strengthen the muscles on the thighs of the flea.

To this shock of humiliation Chinese thought as expressed in art is a stranger. It was by intuition that it arrived long centuries ago at a discovery which we have learnt by pain and with revolt. Here is a landscape which, with its two travellers under towering crags, seems to symbolize Man's place in Nature, and it is typical of Sung art. It has, though so ancient, a truly modern character. If you wish to understand the spirit of this art you have only to recall the poetry of Wordsworth.

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
>
> It is my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes.
>
> An impulse from a vernal wood
> Can teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can.

Lines like these and many others from Wordsworth would have come naturally to the lips of Chinese poets and artists. Is not this refreshing witness to the solidarity of mankind, that a Cumbrian dalesman should be found expressing thoughts and feelings which were familiar to the hearts of people separated from him by a thousand years in time and half the globe in space?

We feel no veiling interval of time between these typical Chinese paintings of a thousand years ago and ourselves. Of how much of European art can we say this?

BEAUTY IN THE MIRROR
by Utamaro
(*British Museum*)

'COXCOMB' MAIZE SCREEN
Attributed to Koyetsu
(*Freer Collection, Washington*)

How modern in spirit the Chinese paintings were so many centuries ago we shall realize if we turn to Persia. For Persian painting really begins with the fall of Baghdad and its destruction by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. The Mongols had conquered China in the same century. All these Chinese paintings which we have been discussing were produced before that date. But now the invading Mongols brought in their wake Chinese artists, and China from that time exercised a certain influence on Persian painting.

The 'Arab' painting which existed before the fall of Baghdad was a growth from the debris of classic art. The real foundation of the Persian painting which began to flourish in the Middle Ages is less this Arab tradition than that tradition of art which had certainly been long established in Turkestan. Just as this old traditional Asian style received a special development under the influence of the Chinese genius, so on the west of Turkestan another process of development from the same or similar origin was set in motion by the genius of the Persian race. For whatever the influence of China, the creative and essential part of Persian painting is truly Persian; and the race of Iran seems always to have been gifted with a fine sense of colour and with the instinct for design. At the back of these, however, there is nothing parallel to the atmosphere of ideas from which Indian art in its way, and Chinese art in its quite different way, were nourished and renewed. Mohammedanism condemned expressive art; and though the prohibition was not literally obeyed where the natural bent for art was strong, it acted as a sterilizing influence by restricting the artist's subject-matter. The themes of Persian painting are, when not portraiture, almost all taken from romance. Visions of deity; spiritual forms and presences; apparitions of power or of pity, these are almost absent from an art dominated by doctrine which forbade the imagination to play about its austere

conception of the Divine Unity. Instead of these, the Persian fancy seems ever intent on thoughts of an earthly paradise.

Persian painting, as we know it, in its purest and finest form is an art of miniature. It is small in scale, whether in the form of illustrations to manuscripts or of albums of single drawings. The drawings are often in outline of an exquisite quality, with perhaps a few touches of colour. But while the line-drawing of the Chinese is of the most varied character—now of an incredible fineness, now broad, bold, and sweeping, or again rough and jagged or violent with splintering strokes—the line of the Persian artists is suave, smooth, and clean, rhythmically used indeed, but presenting little variety of expression.

But the most characteristic Persian painting is richly coloured. And in certain qualities Persian colour is unsurpassed. Most of the paintings have been preserved from exposure between the pages of books, and retain their original lustre.

This page [1] from a sixteenth-century manuscript of the poet Nizami is an admirable example of the art in its full maturity. As a colour-design it is superb. The sharp diagonal lines of the white tents give decision to a decorative effect that might have been too softly sumptuous, with the gold of the ground, the deep blues, the rich crimsons of hangings and dresses, the pale grey-green of the plane-trees.

At the same time we have to allow that the interest of the picture is discursive. The subject is taken from one of the most famous love-stories of the East—the story of Laila and Majnun. The two lovers were parted in youth, and while Laila is married to a rich man by her father, Majnun, in despair, forsakes his family and lives in the desert surrounded by the wild beasts, who become his friends. After some years Laila's husband dies and she

[1] Manuscript of Nizami, dated 1539–43, in the British Museum.

sends for Majnun; but they have suffered too much; they have lived too long in their dream; the reality disenchants; their joy is gone. Here an old nurse is bringing the emaciated Majnun to the tent of Laila. But these, the central figures, are almost lost in the animated surroundings of the scene, the groups busy about the tents, milking the goats, and preparing a meal.

The high horizon and bird's-eye view perspective of Persian painting are common to Asiatic art and to much of the earlier art of Europe. But in Persia there is no development, as with the Chinese and Japanese, in the direction of a landscape art. The study of atmosphere is unknown. The climate of Persia may partly account for this, and also the right instinct of artists working on the decoration of a page. None the less, the fact remains that Persian design after a certain period stagnates. The painters remain content with a prescribed convention, and their efforts seem wholly absorbed in getting the utmost possible richness from their chosen materials.

With this sensuous love of beauty, they cannot resist filling in the accessories of the scene with just as much care and intention in every detail as they devote to the central figures. In the great works of Chinese and Japanese painters, as in masters like Rembrandt, accessories are subdued or suppressed, the colour is limited, and the figures which create the motive of the design are so emphasized, so dominant in the eye, that they seem to transcend the limits of the framing space, they seem alive with all the latent energies of actual men and women. No Persian painting imposes itself thus on the imagination. Everything remains within the frame, inlaid as in a lustrous mosaic. The Persian method has, it is true, its own compensations. The freshness and glory thus brought to the eye, as of a world washed clean, with every object magically distinct and burning with clear colour, make a vivid impression of strangeness. Strangeness, remoteness

from the routine of every day, that is of the essence of romance; and no art in the world is more steeped in romance than the painting of Persia.

What could be more romantic in atmosphere than a page like this, for example, where a king and his counsellor ride up to a ruined village?[1] The original blazes with colour and fine gold; and we see, as with heightened faculties and in a rarefied air, the minutest details of the scene—the gazelles grazing in the doorway of the ruin, the detached fragments of painted tiles, the herons in their nest against a sky of dappled blue and white, the delicate single plants of red mallow or purple iris that border the little stream. The splendour of articulate Nature is brought home to us with a kind of intoxicating effect.

The Persian style and Persian example were carried into India by the Mogul conquerors, the descendants of Tamerlane. The great emperor Akbar, who died at the beginning of the seventeenth century, encouraged art at his court. Persian painting by this time was enfeebled and mannered, but its older tradition was taken up by the Hindus. The great majority of the Indian paintings generally seen belong to the Mogul school thus created. Classic Persian themes of romance were handled again by Indian artists; but the great strength of the school is in portraiture. No period in all history is more vividly illustrated for us in the persons of its prominent men than this. But after all the Mogul school represents a hybrid art. It is neither wholly Indian nor wholly Persian. It is happiest, perhaps, in such drawings as this, where a group of ascetics is drawn with a sympathy for the life of contemplation that Persian art rarely shows.[2] But there is more living interest in the purely Indian styles which existed side by side with the Mogul school. This genuine Indian painting, the

[1] Manuscript of Nizami, 1539–43, in the British Museum.

[2] Drawing in the collection of W. Rothenstein, *Indian Drawings*, published by Coomaraswamy for the India Society.

painting of Rajputana, the product chiefly of valleys of the Himalayas where the culture of the Mohammedan conquerors did not dominate, is still but little known. Yet it deserves our study. For here, after so many centuries which remain a blank, we recapture something of the early spirit of Ajanta, the humanity, the joyousness, the tenderness, the spirituality diffused in life itself. The themes of this art are drawn from the life of a race preserving its ancient ways and its ancient legends, above all the legends of Krishna. The drawing of a youthful warrior published by Dr. Coomaraswamy seems to breathe the spirit of the old Rajpūt race. This and other examples of this eminently happy art are remarkably pure in line. Untouched by Persian influence, these Indian drawings contrast strangely in their airy delicacy and intimacy with the extravagant, feverish effort, the loaded ornament, and inchoate design which mark so much of later Indian sculpture. You see, too, how essentially different it is from Persian work. These Indian draughtsmen love to contain their figures within continuous rhythmic lines; and in this and in their feeling for the innate beauty of natural gesture and attitude they remind us of another popular art, the art of the colour-print designers of Japan.

It is to Japan that we must now turn.

In a sense Japan owes everything to China. But it is in the same sense that the nations of the West may be said to owe everything to Judaea, Greece, and Rome. Only a race of the finest creative gift as well as the finest susceptibility could have been able to do what the Japanese have done; their art, even when most closely following Chinese example, has always in it something of native mood and fibre. That they should have kept so close to Chinese tradition for so many centuries and yet have produced a variation so alive and so continuously and freshly inventive proves their originality as much as it proves their unique docility. It is a superficial view which sees

in a painter like Ingres only an inferior imitation of Raphael; and it is a superficial view which sees in the art of Japan only an inferior imitation of the art of China.

Even in the periods in which the main aim of Japanese masters was to emulate the Chinese they adored, there is always that spontaneous difference which reveals a creative element. I think we can feel it in what is the earliest Japanese landscape,[1] the 'Waterfall of Nachi'. But for my present purpose I shall single out only those phases of Japanese art which are most purely Japanese.

A certain fastidiousness, a love of scrupulous and cleanly order, belongs to the Japanese character; we find it in their manners, their habits, their furniture, in all their workmanship, just as we feel it in the thirteenth-century portrait of a boy saint praying on the lotus.[2] The word 'exquisite', so often misapplied, is an epithet truly applicable to the art of Japan. The faults of this character are a tendency to the smallness which often goes with neatness. The Japanese do not work under the pressure of abundant ideas and torrential emotions; they do not fall into the excess and extravagance which sometimes beset the Chinese. But their unfailing sense of style compensates in great measure for the lack of more genial exuberance. Taste with them, as with artists like Velasquez and Whistler, becomes no mere negative avoidance but a positive and vitalizing factor. One might, perhaps, compare the Japanese genius in some aspects with the Latin genius, as it is shown in certain types of Latin and of French poetry, where a telling economy of words and fineness of handling are made to compensate for a slightness or an almost complete absence of matter.

Again, we must never forget that while the Chinese are a pacific people the Japanese are a martial people; and

[1] Waterfall of Nachi. L. Binyon, *Painting in the Far East* (3rd ed.), Plate X. (Arnold.)

[2] *Painting in the Far East* (3rd ed.), Plate XV.

this is not without its effect on their art. And with their high spirit goes a gay temper and a vivacity that again remind us of France.

And in the earlier periods it is rather in the themes of war and battle that the genius of Japanese painters is most effectively disengaged. No battle-pictures in the world have surpassed those of the Japanese masters of the thirteenth century. The long rolls which they preferred were indeed signally adapted to the portrayal of the various incidents of warfare, with its shocks, alarms, and surprises. We watch the advance of haughty warriors or, as in this fragment, see them making ready in their camp, where the ox-drawn chariots are ranged in order; we see flights of arrows from an ambush; furious onslaughts on stockades; the burning of palaces; the confused stampede of flight; the whole moving scene of war, in fact, pictured far more truly than when, as with us, a single scene must be contracted within the confines of a frame. And in these Japanese paintings the suppression of all but essentials is matched by the extreme intensity and energy of the figures. These do not strike heroic attitudes, but they are living, daring, desperate men.[1]

But alongside this martial energetic design we find an extreme delicacy, as in the illustrations to romances and scenes from voluptuous court life, where the colour is of extraordinary richness, and where flowers are drawn with the same isolation of delicate form that we find in Persian miniatures. Mitsuoki's picture of a poetess [2] wandering on the hills among the cherry-blossom, the petals of which drift about her on the air, is typical of later productions of the same school, strongly contrasting with the vivid melting impressionism of the Chinese style.

In the fifteenth century the Chinese style had captured

[1] Keion, Boston Museum. *Painting in the Far East* (3rd ed.); and Keion, *Kokka*, No. 136.

[2] Mitsuoki, *Kokka*, No. 45.

and overwhelmed wellnigh the whole art of Japan. Sesshu and his compeers were emulating the inspired Sung masters in impassioned visions of mountains, mists, and torrents, or in figures of the great saints and sages boldly struck on to the paper by the ink-charged brush. It was a wonderful burst, a brilliant period. But I must pass over this splendid and enthusiastic revival of Chinese ideals and Chinese style because, though it is associated with men of commanding genius, and though it is by no means to be dismissed as a mere imitation of Chinese art, I have not the space to deal with anything but what is most characteristically Japanese.

The Chinese movement lost, as it was bound to lose in time, its strength and energy. It fell off into academic routine, it lost touch with the real genius of Japan. And yet its influence remained; art could not be as if this great revival had never happened. The problem was, how to graft the Chinese strain, the Chinese largeness and depth, on to the native principles of design. The problem was most successfully solved by a group of artists whose favourite means of expression was screen-painting. Here at any rate is no smallness, no pretty elegance, such as some people imagine to be the constant attribute of Japanese art. On the contrary, a synthetic grasp of Nature, learnt from Chinese example, is in these great screens united with the utmost audacity of design and with a splendour of colour inherited from Japan's own ancient schools. In Koyetsu's 'Maize' screen,[1] subtle and complex as it is, how broad and bold is the design! It is as if we had a magic glimpse into the teeming breast of earth from which the flowers are tossed up in their splendour and profusion. Superb as decoration, it is also full of the essential mystery of life and growth. I do not think the world has at all yet realized what a magnificent page of art, unique in history and of its kind incomparable, is

[1] Freer Collection. *Painting in the Far East*, Plate XXXVI.

presented by these paintings. In this school perhaps more than anywhere else the peculiar genius of Japan flowers most triumphantly. And it has this special interest for us to-day, that it offers masterpiece on masterpiece created on the very lines which some of the latest artists of Europe are trying to pursue These masters are not preoccupied with Nature, sitting down before a landscape and grappling with its structure, its atmosphere, its light and shade, its colour. No; they start with their own free design, leaving themselves absolute liberty in the handling of whatever elements they choose to absorb from the visible glory of the world. But they do not turn their backs on Nature; whatever natural form or appearance they seize they seek to press out of it its quintessence. And so the landscape in such a screen as Yeitoku's 'Pines in Snow' impresses us even more vividly and powerfully than if the main elements of it were obscured by all the accident and detail involved in what is called fidelity.[1]

Again, in another fine screen—it belongs to a different school, but one equally distinguished by Japanese character—how the abstraction, the isolation of the figures, like those on a Greek vase, throws into relief the beauty of gesture and the rhythm of movement, and how finely spaced is the whole design! This screen is one of the early masterpieces of Ukiyoyé, the school of popular art which produced the colour-prints we all admire.

As a last example I shall show a print which has the same qualities in a high degree, the same faith in the beauty of natural action, the same expressive purity of drawing, by that marvellous master of figure-design, Utamaro.[2]

The few examples I have been able to show you are the merest index to some of the predominant phases of the painting of Asia. But they will serve, at least, to illus-

[1] Yeitoku, Freer Collection. *Painting in the Far East*, Plate XXX.

[2] In the British Museum.

trate both the real relation that exists between the arts of these various countries and the inherent difference of character which has made each what it is.

The absence of the scientific spirit, which has had so potent an influence on the art of Europe since the Renaissance, the absence of this spirit and its application to all the problems of representation is, perhaps, the source of the most obvious differences between the painting of East and West. If we take a deeper view, the essential likeness between all fine creative work becomes more apparent the more we study.

But within the art of Asia itself we note a real division. Indian art may be broadly compared with the medieval art of Europe. It is practically anonymous. Very few names of individual artists are recorded. There are no great outstanding personalities. It is an art of popular tradition, still able, at least in architecture, to work wonders with none of the scientific apparatus and divided labour that are necessary with us. It is also, like medieval art, pervaded by religion and the religious spirit. That makes it immensely interesting for us in an age when the popular crafts have so much died out and have lost touch with the expressive arts. On the other hand, its limitations are very great—how great, we realize when we turn to China and Japan, where, though the crafts have remained in touch with the arts, painting has developed within itself movements corresponding to the movements in western painting, and where a surprising amount of work that is centuries old seems modern in feeling and contemporary with ourselves. Chinese and Japanese painting touch every side of human life, every relation of the human spirit to the world of Nature.

The character of an art is seen perhaps even more clearly in its decadence than in its maturity. The pictorial traditions of Asia tend in decay toward something that is little more than an arabesque of lines, from which the sap

and savour given by the constant effort to understand and delineate the world of nature have gradually perished. Western art decays in the direction of a literal naturalism, out of which the rhythmical impulse of design has died. These two great traditions complement each other. In purity of aim Eastern art is superior to Western; in range, enterprise, and that vitality which comes from constant struggle, it is Western art that is superior: it is Western art, I think, that has the greater future. But I do not wish to provoke idle discussion of relative merit. Let us rather cherish the fact that in the master-works of these two great continents art reveals its fundamental unity. Separated though we are by all the difference of our ancestral past, by language, custom, and moulds of thought, let us rejoice to recognize that in these far countries the human spirit expresses and transforms into beauty the same griefs and joys, the same emotions, passions, and aspirations that we know ourselves.

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VII

OLD CHRISTIAN ART

By Joseph Strzygowski

Old Christian art stands on the frontier between antique and medieval times. But we must be careful to avoid any idea of a simple, direct sequence in one straight line. We have rather to think of antiquity and the Middle Ages, in the realm of art, as two parallel streams, the antique arising as the last stage of the palaeolithic South, and the medieval as coming much later and being the consummation of the neolithic North.

This is my general thesis: but when we turn to our special subject in this lecture, we find a useful finger-post in the Tabula Peutingeriana, which was the pilgrims' itinerary to Jerusalem for the whole Roman Empire in the fourth century A.D. It gives us the first direct evidence of the idea that Jerusalem was the centre of the Roman sphere. As early as the fourth century Jerusalem takes for Christians the place of the old 'caput mundi', Rome. Just as the aim of every Moslem's life to-day is to reach Mecca, so Christians from the time of Constantine until the end of the Crusades were drawn by a similar yearning towards Jerusalem. It thus becomes a new capital beside Rome and Byzantium, a focus for the Christian world. It superseded Alexandria and Antioch as a centre of art, and led its pilgrims through countries in which art was more dependent on the Hellenistic-Persian culture in the East than on that of the Mediterranean. Thus Christ became a turning-point in the evolution of western art 300 years after his birth, much as, 300 years before it, Alexander the Great had changed the course of eastern destinies.

Old Christian Art may therefore be looked at either from

the Asiatic or the European point of view, and we shall find the creative faculty in the period at least as active in the vast regions between India and the Mediterranean as it was in the West. In the Persian sphere of culture Christianity wins its way quite as successfully as it does about the Mediterranean. In the East it meets with the most diverse creeds; it comes in contact with Mazdaism and Buddhism; it is overpowered at last by Islam. In the West it remains victorious. From this victory many Western scholars have concluded, not indeed that Christianity itself, but that Christian art must have originated amongst us, and that, like some tender plant, it has been fostered, root and branch, exclusively by us ever since. The truth, in my view, rather is that it was not until the twelfth century, when the North created the new Gothic style and the eyes of the West were opened to observation of nature, that Christian art in the West began to run its own peculiar course. This was the true Renaissance of the thirteenth century. Up to then, for all its Greco-Roman setting, it was really dependent on Eastern art, whether Hellenistic, or Persian, or Semitic.

We will now take the chief phases of this Old Christian Art in their chronological and topographical sequence.

A. *Before Constantine*

Even before Jerusalem, the source of Christianity, became the centre of the Christian world, there was Christian art both about the Mediterranean and in the East itself. Christians, like other religious communities, had been building places for their worship, beautifying burial-grounds, and introducing into them representations of scenes from the Old and New Testaments as well as symbols and ornaments. We have of course still remaining paintings in the catacombs, and sarcophagi in Rome: these have caused Rome to be represented as the source of Christian art. But there must also have been artistic

works in Alexandria and Antioch and in those political organizations such as Osroene and Armenia, which had embraced Christianity as their state-religion before the time of Constantine. Mani, the founder of the Manichean sect, who was put to death in 276, had painted pictures and decorated books. But for all this work before Constantine we must, for the present, mainly draw our conclusions backwards from the more fully developed examples of his time.

The same reasoning applies to ecclesiastical architecture. The reports of the Byzantine Research Fund now prove conclusively that the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem has come down to us in its present state from the time of Constantine. It is a basilica of the five-aisled type; but it is distinguished from the basilicas of Rome by a rich, peculiarly constructed choir. The same applies to Constantine's other buildings, the great galleried church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Octagon at Antioch, the San Vitale in Ravenna, lastly the cruciform church of the Apostles in Constantinople. The types are so various and the individual characteristics so numerous that we cannot but suppose that a vigorous, innovating, and creative force was already at work by the time of Constantine, quite opposite to the uniformity of the ecclesiastical architecture of Rome.

The most ancient types of the representation of Christ bear out the same contention. The Roman-Hellenistic type is of a beautiful youth with curling locks; the Aramaean a bearded man with smooth, parted hair, as on the Constantine cup in the British Museum. The difference between Greek and Oriental taste is also evident in the attention paid by the Greeks to the human form and the greater prominence given by the Easterns to ornament.

The final result in Old Christian Art is a combination of the various influences. The Hellenistic representation of the human figure went farther and farther East, while

the Eastern motive of decoration penetrated to the West. In one signal point the victory lay with the Oriental type; we cannot to-day imagine Christ other than as a bearded man.

B. *The Fourth to the Sixth Centuries*

This is the crucial period, when artistic types were crystallized into forms which held good during the thousand years that followed. It was Asia and not the Mediterranean which guided their evolution. This is the period when Jerusalem and Nisibis became the Christian centres, and Constantinople arose as a new metropolis beside the old ones. These three cities were at that time the poles of the eastern world, which stood firm amid the flood of peaceful commerce and monastic development on the one hand, and the threatening waves of the migration of Eastern peoples Westward on the other. In that central area the forces met and hollowed out a new channel for the streams of art. Much is uncertain as to the part played by the various factors in this evolution; one thing is clear; the peculiar features of Oriental decorative art extended then over a vastly larger area than in the Roman period.

Opinion has been growing and changing rapidly on these questions in recent years. Time was, and not so long ago, when Rome was considered the dominating factor, with a certain questioning defiance of what Byzantium might bring forth. Anyhow Syria and Asia Minor were out of the picture. My own journeys to Constantinople, Greece, and Asia Minor completely changed this point of view, at least for me.[1] It became clear to me that Constantinople does not offer the key to what is called the Byzantine question; it is rather the mere focus where rays from the East all converged.

The great cities of the Mediterranean, such as Alexandria

[1] See *Orient oder Rom*, *Kleinasien*, *Mschatta*, *Amida*, and *The Origin of Christian Church Art* (Clarendon Press).

and Antioch, were by no means the only centres of Hellenistic art. There was in the heart of Hither Asia the ancient Bactria, which, though late, counts for so much in the rise of Islamic culture; there was Seleukia on the Tigris, to which Sassanid art owes a great deal of its strong Hellenistic turn; there was finally the triangle of Northern Mesopotamian cities, Edessa, Amida, and Nisibis, which together with Armenia play an important part in the development of Christian art. This East Arian and Aramaic hinterland to Asia, Syria, Palestine, and even Egypt, combined the forces of Nearer Asia and was the seed-plot for Christian art.

These Northern Mesopotamian churches are not the small, provincialized copies of those in Syria which we might have supposed. Look at the great central churches of Wizanschehr, Resaba, and Amida! How amazing an individual achievement they bespeak! The oval, octagonal cupola of the ancient Constantina measures 67 metres long by 50 wide, the central church of Sergiopolis is 42·5 by 36. In Amida we have remains and a description of the church of the Virgin, which show that it was in the style of the destroyed church of St. Benignus at Dijon and as large as the chief churches of Venice.

Miss Lowthian Bell discovered in the mountain of Abdin near Nisibis a whole set of monasteries and city churches of the barrel-vaulted type, some with the specifically Mesopotamian feature of the nave across, others of the longitudinal type. In Nisibis itself she found the church of St. Jacob built in 359. The whole immense region of Syria and Asia Minor is equally rich in the most various types of buildings. There are domed basilicas and centralized churches which form connecting links with the most magnificent examples of these types, the church of the Apostles and St. Sophia in Constantinople. There is an advance in them too in architectural decoration such as the world perhaps has never seen since. These two great

churches were first built by Constantine and then renewed by Justinian. St. Sophia was to be a triumph over Solomon's Temple and the sign of victory was the cupola. This feature, the dome over the square bay, which Justinian's architects employed, came to them from the East; it was of Iranian origin and it went on from Constantinople to St. Peter's in Rome. The Nisibis church of 359 gives the rudimentary type and you find it also in Mesopotamia. After the fifth century the Armenian clergy wished to introduce the longitudinal type and a compromise was the result. You see the same thing, by the will of the Roman Church, in the Gesù in Rome, while in St. Peter's the beautiful original design of Bramante and Michelangelo was similarly spoilt.

When we turn from architecture to sculpture and the pictorial arts there is abundant evidence of the same influence from the East. The ancient marble quarries at Cyzicus were one of the chief reasons why Constantine founded his new capital on the Bosporus. They supplied the whole Mediterranean littoral with columns, but at the time of which we speak they were not antique capitals which the workmen sent, but forms embodying a new spirit. The carving of the acanthus leaves is changed, and in the composite capitals baskets with flatly rendered vine-leaves and trellis-work take the place of the acanthus. The covering slab is decorated with beasts' and birds' heads instead of angles and bosses. Finally, even the form itself changes and the impost or funnel appears, massive and unbroken, often decorated with purely Persian surface ornament.

There were innumerable offshoots from the Asiatic Colossus in early Christian times. Take the growth of the silk industry. It started in the farthest East, spread through Persia to Syria, and finally settled down ineradicably in Constantinople, and later in Palermo and Spain. The patterns are mainly Persian, the Palmette with a

double-band ornament enriched with hunting scenes. You find on them also episodes from the Bible, the frames of which, formed of closely knotted circles, have become a favourite motive in the West. Some centuries later embroidery takes the place of silk-weaving as the leading influence in decorative art.

In the singular decoration of Byzantine capitals and silks we find elements from another pre-Christian religion of the East, the Iranian Mazdaism which once in the form of Mithraism overspread the Roman world. From this source comes what is called the Hoarenah *motif*, the Glory and Majesty of God. This was the best possession of the home, averting evil, giving increase of posterity. It appears sometimes as a bird in flight, sometimes as a swimming or diving creature, sometimes in other animal forms like the goat or the ram. Plants and animals on palace façades, as at Mschatta, or on costumes are symbols of Hoarenah to protect the inhabitants or the wearer. The best example of all was the outside decoration of the church of Achthamer near the lake of Van. It dated from the beginning of the tenth century and was destroyed in the War.

As the construction of decorative sepulchres declined and the architecture of monumental churches advanced in pictorial presentment, so we see the didactic and historical methods of the East take the place of the older Hellenistic and Mazdaistic symbolism. There is a good example in the mosaic on the façade of the church of the Nativity at Jerusalem. Mary appears there enthroned between 'The Nativity' and 'The Adoration of the Kings'. The Magi are clad in costumes so purely Persian that the Sassanid conquerors refrained from destroying the church on that account. Or take the Archangel of the Greek ivory tablet in the British Museum. He stands on the steps of the proscenium of the ancient theatre, so majestic in bearing and interpretation that he continued ever after

APSE-MOSAIC IN SS. COSMAS AND DAMIAN, ROME

(*After Wilpert*)

to dominate the Middle Ages. Akin to him in expression and interpretation is the Christ in the mosaic of the Good Shepherd in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia at Ravenna.

The landscape in that case is highly typical, a geometrical landscape with Biblical scenes and figures. This type of landscape we know from all parts round Iran, in China as well as in India and the West. It is the old Mazdean Hoarenah landscape, composed from nature, but symbolizing God's power that makes the running water gush from springs, plants sprout from the soil, winds blow the clouds, and men come to birth. Hoarenah governs the courses of sun, moon, and stars, it permeates the whole country-side and particularly the land of Seistan through which the river Helmand flows. Scenes from the chase, river landscapes with fishing scenes are some of the commonest features of the Mazdean idea, and they occur in Rome especially connected with Zoroastrian conceptions of the Last Judgement, when rosy flames rise at dawn and the Gates of Heaven are opened according to the Avesta. The best example of this is the splendid mosaic of St. Cosmas and St. Damiano in the Forum at Rome.

C. *Europe after the Invasion of Eastern Tribes*

The northern nomadic tribes carried with them into Europe immense quantities of golden vessels and other furniture wrought in the Persian style. The Germans took with them in their flight jewellery with Indian stones set in Persia and its hinterlands, double and triple band ornaments, enriched with birds' and beasts' heads.

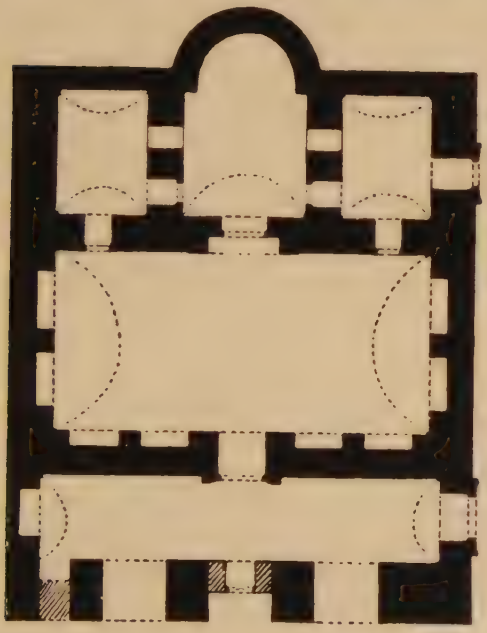
While this transforming power from the North and Middle East sweeps on like a hurricane, and brings to a close the prehistoric development of the north of Europe, Christianity is slowly filtering in from the south. Before the migration, the Church in Celtic Gaul and even as far as Ireland is entirely permeated with Greek culture. After the resettlement of the Germans, it is pre-eminently the

great Irish Apostles who bring back to the continent the ancient Hellenistic culture together with a knowledge of the Greek language, and they met there monks and merchants who were in close touch with the East.

I shall begin, as before, with architecture and again limit my scope. I shall omit altogether as sterile forms the Hellenistic basilica, the church with columns, wooden roof, and exterior atrium; this was the only type which at that time prevailed in Rome. I shall consider only the vaulted construction which then matured in the West into that fine flower of architecture called Romanesque. By restricting our attention to this point I hope to make clear the conclusion that the forms of Oriental art did not reach the West through the Crusades—as has been maintained—but rather that forms were developed simultaneously both in East and West along parallel lines. Thus, so far as concerns vaulting in particular, long before the Romanesque period, not only in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor but also in Spain and Lombardy we can point to the existence of basilica-shaped churches with vaulting, and vaulting is a better indication than general construction.

Look at certain western Gothic churches of Spain beside similar churches in the region of Tur-Abdin in Mesopotamia. San Juan Bautista in Baños was built by Receswinthus in 661. This church shows three barrel-vaulted, parallel aisles with horseshoe arch through, and this—let me observe—already in pre-Islamic times. It is, however, the beautiful vaulting which is the essential characteristic of the western Gothic churches, especially when the church is aisleless. Sancta Maria de Naranco, the Aula Regia built by Ramiro in 859, and Santa Christina de Lena, illustrate this.

But these vaulted buildings are generally triple-aisled, as in Santullano in Oviedo which has a broad transept and all its parts barrel-vaulted. I place beside these the ground-plan made by Miss Bell of Mar Jakub in Salah and the cloister of Mar Gabriel both in the Tigris region north



SALAH, MAR YAKUB

of Nisibis. There you have the barrel-vaulted transept, with the three apses also barrel-vaulted. The elongated body of the church is barrel-vaulted, too; in short the form of the building is exactly similar in principle to those in Spain. One difference in construction may be noted. In Spain there are transverse arches made in the stone; in Mesopotamia the splendid tile-vaulting runs smoothly over the whole length, with transverse arches constructed either of stone or tiles. The barrel-vaulting with transverse arches and the horseshoe arch of the Spanish churches are the favourite motives of ecclesiastical architecture in Central Asia Minor. Such you see in the nave of the ruined cathedral of Binbirkilisse. Nothing more striking to the same effect could be seen than the ground-plan and elevation of one of those churches, with towered front and almost Romanesque piers, uncovered by Sir William Ramsay and Miss Bell in Central Asia Minor.

Such churches must have been the starting-point of the great building-movement in Milan, and its impulse probably dates back to the time of St. Ambrose. The great building movement of the East came oversea by way of Ravenna, Milan, and Marseilles and overland by means of the Adriatic and Greek artists who travelled westward in the train of the Goths. Buildings such as the tomb of Theodoric or, later, the church of Germigny-les-Près seem to me explicable only in this way. The double-choired churches, the choir with radiating chapels, the cruciform basilicas, in place of the old Christian T-shaped churches, have all their origin in the East. The West—Gaul, the Rhine, and the British Isles—shared in the great development of Christian art in the East. The offshoots of the eastern monastic orders, the Gothic migration, commerce, and the constant pilgrimages to Jerusalem, continued the fusion of Celtic and Hellenistic culture. Common art-motives abound in both regions, east and west, just as similar stone crosses appear both in Armenia and in the British Isles.

There is a rich field for further investigation here, and England should lead the way. It is in the north-west borderlands of India and in Bactria that the greatest discoveries will be made.

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VIII

MEDIEVAL ART

By Joseph Strzygowski

We saw in the last chapter that we could not treat Medieval art merely as an intermediate term between the spread of Christianity and the Renaissance, following directly from the one and leading directly to the other. It is rather a complex of essential traits than merely the art of a certain period of time. It appeared in European history as a development of the art of ancient Northern Europe and Asia between A.D. 400 and 1400. It exists even to-day among people of such mentality as the producers of Mohammedan art. Its most essential characteristic is that Medieval art knows no naturalistic foundation, and unlike the art of our own time can be understood only as a building or as the decoration of a building. It has as its centre some architectural symbol, not a stone statue symbolizing a god, not a picture painted on a table. If we take Medieval art in this sense, Europe is not its only home: it follows no antique models and did not end with the Renaissance. How can we explain this meaning of the term, so different from that usually accepted?

Well, the true material for the history of art is not what has been written about it but the works themselves. So we shall begin in this lecture with some account of the monuments of European Medieval art, then try to extract from them their purely artistic values, and only in the last place consider the problems of history and evolution. Then we may ask how far what we have discovered from the monuments themselves agrees with what the philosophers and theorists have written in the handbooks and how art-inquiry should be managed in the future.

It is not yet a hundred years since people began to speak

of Medieval art. From the time of Vasari, about 1550, the barbarian 'art of the Goths' was hated and despised, and the term 'Gothic' was used as an insult. Interest in Medieval art only awoke in the nineteenth century. The pre-Raphaelites in England were ardent prophets of it, and when one reads Ruskin one feels that he had a deep tradition of the Medieval spirit behind him. In England, indeed, the style predominates: the Houses of Parliament, the churches, the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, are all examples. The school of Palladio never destroyed the link in England, and it goes back beyond the Norman Conquest. It is in fact the development of the old art of the North after the decline of Romanesque, and its true home is Northern France, Germany, and England.

What we call Romanesque art has its first monuments in southern France, the old Aquitaine, in Lombardy, and on the banks of the Rhine, that is to say, in the western parts of Europe between the North and the South. England came into this sphere after the time of the Normans. Southern France is full of Romanesque buildings, especially along the old pilgrim roads of Cluny. But all these beautiful Romanesque monuments were only the first part of Medieval art. Modern art uses these forms together with what we call the 'Byzantine' style, for instance, in the new cathedral in Westminster. But just as Westminster Abbey can never be placed second to such a building, so the Gothic, the style of the greater part of the English cathedrals, what may be called the national style, will remain for ever dominant in the history of Medieval art. If one looks round Europe from Vienna westward and from Rome and Milan northward to Upsala and Trondhjem in Scandinavia, one has the impression of an enormous independent northern movement which first represents a purely Western European unity in art, while the Romanesque style is rather imported into Europe from the Asiatic East, as we saw in the last chapter.

With regard to dates one cannot follow the old precise divisions. It has been customary to say that it was about A.D. 1000 that vaulting began in Western Europe. But we saw in the last chapter that in the East vaulting had been used from the beginning, and in Ravenna, Milan, and Spain long before the year 1000. We notice also that the typical ornaments of Medieval art and the representation of Christ, Mary, and the saints are older than the year 1000. In fact you cannot draw any sharp line between the periods. From the beginning of the fourth century onwards classical features begin to give way more and more to others which we call Byzantine in the East, Germanic in the North; and these are later again merged in what we call Medieval art.

Medieval art is closely bound up with certain raw materials, and with buildings for religious meetings, with ornamentation of tools, and with illustrations of devotional books. Its motives are not therefore taken from the antique temples and statues.

The religious building itself is the artistic unit and determines the use of the figures and other decorations within it. And there were no single, individual artists to give the lead. The mind which inspired them, like the civilization on which they rest, was a collective one. This is one of the 'values' of the art which we interpret from its monuments, and we have to distinguish carefully these 'values' from the facts on the one hand and purely aesthetic theories on the other.

To appreciate this 'value'—the social and spiritual value—of Medieval art, we could not take two more perfect examples than the Sainte-Chapelle in the Court Palace of Paris and the statuary at Chartres or Reims.

Materially and technically, Medieval art has its firmest roots in the handicrafts. Stone-masters, organized in guilds, are the promoters of all buildings. You must be a learned master or you can never build in Romanesque or

Gothic style. The Magistri Comacini, perhaps in the beginning an organization of Armenian type, lead us on to that master organization which built, for instance, the cathedral of St. Stephen, the Vienna Guild of Stone-Masons. When one considers the different shaping of the thousands of stones which form such a cathedral, one can well understand that it seemed to be a secret, and was called a 'mystery'.

Stone itself cannot be the original material of the fine work which we see in Gothic churches. The fact that Gothic architecture as opposed to Romanesque grew up in the North gives us a hint, and we remember that the Greek temple grew from the structure of a northern wooden house, and that in Iran the northern custom of laying beams across the corners was the starting-point for the cupola. When we compare the only preserved wooden buildings of that time, that is, the Norwegian stave churches, it certainly occurs to one that the origin of the Gothic style falls in with the geographical frontier, between the Romanesque stone church of the South and the popular wooden church of the North.

The Christian church was not only, like the pagan temple, a house of God and a place for sacrifice; it was essentially a hall for assembly. Now there were northern buildings of that kind before Christianity reached the North, halls with four masts which in the case of larger buildings could be increased to twelve. Look at the plan of the church of Borgund. You must not confound it with that of a true basilica, for instance that of any Gothic cathedral. Looking nearer, you will observe the difference. The old northern hall has only three masts in each corner, not two lines of columns or pillars. There are masts before the entrance and the apse, but no masts in the middle of the sides. Clearly there were in the North wooden buildings of the basilica kind but of quite a different construction, and their shape and form influenced

Ph. Arthur Gardner, M.A.

CHARTRES. NORTH PORCH

The Visitation and the Prophet Daniel

the stone-builders when they crossed the frontier of the wooden North. If we look at the details of such a Gothic monument we find so many new construction *motifs* that it is impossible to connect it with the old Romanesque of the South. The new type of building is not based on wall and vaults but on buttressed, mast-like shafts ending in ribs: these give the ground conception. Now where could this idea have been found? It is impossible that it could first have been worked out in stone; it needs a raw material of veined consistency like wood. The Norwegian churches show this. They have a system of meeting thrusts: they have masts, buttressed by the frame-walls and the roof of the aisles, and the idea of a triforium first appears in such a wooden structure.

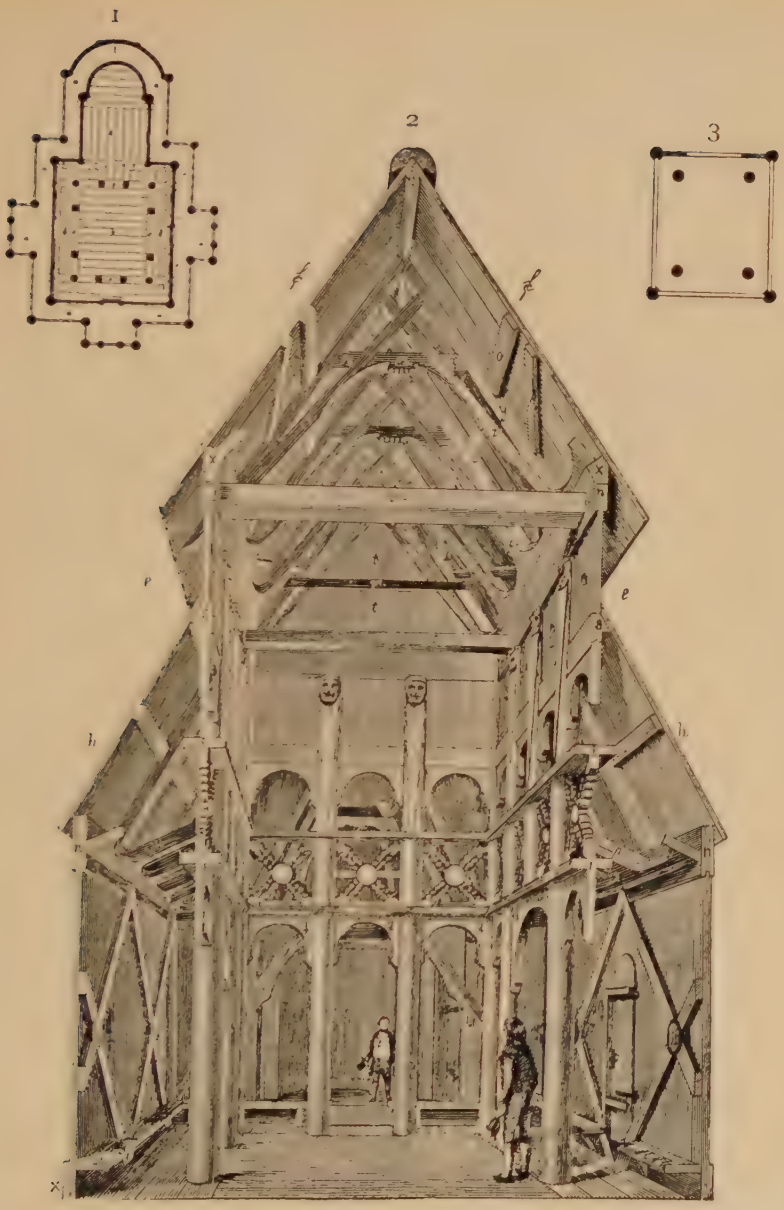
Changing from wood to stone brought a new feeling of growth and life to the dead material. We see how the structural members begin to move; the plant and animal and finally the human body enter into the decoration, and the old northern ornament filling a given field is superseded, as it once was in Greek art, by naturalistic motives put together in a strong architectural form.

We noticed that the artistic values of the Middle Ages differ from those of Egyptian or Hellenistic art. Some of the separate points are of fascinating interest and significant of profound differences in the whole civilization. It was not the naked body but the folds of the garments which attracted the Gothic stone-master. He gives the movement of lines, not the silent beauty of the body. A new feeling for modelling light and shadow supersedes the Romanesque flat manner. The human figure is no longer, as in the Romanesque style, a mere letter for pictorial writing, but nature becomes again as in Greek art an object of intense artistic study. The coloured light of glass windows instead of bare walls points to a time not far distant when the human figure will be seen as part of a landscape, and Van Dyck, Dürer, and Rembrandt

finish in painting the work begun in architecture and sculpture.

It was not the individual artist but a new artistic spirit in the North which brought movement into architecture. First came handicraft, and then that yearning which we saw in the old Mazdean symbols of Hoarenah. All beings, plants, animals, and especially landscape, are penetrated by the might, glory, and majesty of God. It was not an ecclesiastical but a purely religious yearning which we find expressed in the great Gothic cathedrals. The expression is a new one, akin to that which built the stopes and pagodas of India and put figures in the gables of the temples of Greece.

When we try to picture to ourselves the evolution of all this art in one stream or progression, the traditional idea of the tree with its roots in Egypt and Greece, its trunk in Rome and the Middle Ages, and its crown in the Renaissance, first occurs to our mind. But we have learnt in both these chapters that this is a picture which does not fit the facts. It would be truer to think of two trees, one growing up from the Equator, another hanging down from the North Pole. That was an old Aryan idea and we should do well to return to it. We can see the connexions between Africa and Southern Europe in those palaeolithic pictures of Altamira, the carvings from Southern France, the Venus of Vollendorf in Vienna, together with old Egyptian art. But we have seen also that from quite ancient times the tree of the North reached down to the South, and that Greek art is a northern flower on southern ground. You can show it if you will as a flower on the southern tree, but you must never forget that the northern tree was there, and that Greek art was a cross between the North and the South. Broadly speaking, the art of the South is antique, and the art of the North is medieval. If I want, therefore, to show where Medieval art grew up, I must look to the North of Asia



NORWEGIAN WOODEN CHURCHES

after Dietrichsen

1, 2. Borgund ; plan and interior 3. Valdres, plan

and Europe, and consider not only that period which we call in European history 'medieval', but in general all that time when the North made its first steps in pictorial art.

We are familiar with the first great steps of northern art in the South—the Aryan movements which flourished in the peninsulas of India and Greece—but historians have not hitherto reckoned with the fact that since that time there existed, on the frontier of the North towards the South in Inner Asia, a purely northern people, the Iranians, who first developed what we call Medieval art. It was in Hellenistic times that this kind of art first appeared in antiquity, and we saw in the last chapter that we may distinguish three sources of old Christian art, viz. Christian antiquity, Christian Iranism, and Christian Semitism. When we come to consider the evolution of Medieval art, which is a later development following these, we have to ask whether the regions in which the greatest quantity of monuments is found is also the original home of the art. Are they the result of a constant factor to be found working in the locality of the monuments, or might some powerful influence, or unexpected revolution, have introduced that type or spirit from elsewhere?

It is, of course, a fact that the spiritual or social influences such as Court, Church, and Seven Liberal Arts, cultivated by the monasteries in medieval times, were imported from the South-East and did not originate in the North, and Christianity as a whole found its way to the North not only from land to land but also directly from the East to Ireland and from there to the Continent and Scandinavia.

But the constant factor, the driving power, in Medieval art is not the inspiration which it derived from Rome, but the fact that in the south-western parts of Europe and finally in the North itself the northern art-tree won from its own root and trunk a crown. The great cathedrals of England, France, and Germany are the flourishing

crown of European northern art. This line of research is in my view the only true one, and, if we take it, we shall recognize that Romanesque was something different, essentially not a European but an Eastern art. Aquitania was, like Lombardy and Spain, a territory of high culture in Hellenistic and Roman times, and there we find a last wave of the Romanesque which had flowed over from the East under the impulse of Christianity. But Gothic grew up in the north of Europe itself in territories where the civilization of the Roman Empire had not destroyed the popular culture.

There are climatic reasons which explain why northern art starts from handicraft. The necessities of house-building and clothing gave a strong direction to the evolutionary process.

The North built and decorated their dwellings and their garments. The South lived in caves and painted pictures of animals on the walls. Climatic conditions often give the clue to supposed racial differences.

Nor must we neglect the aspect of the North as a store-house of raw material. In earlier times the North had used big stones for monuments and wood for buildings. Then came Romanesque art, building in the south-western parts of the North with cubical blocks of stone, a method which has been employed for thousands of years in the South. In all parts quarries were opened, though the North itself continued to build with wood. At last they met, and it was a momentous event when the stone-cutting of the South and the wood-building of the North joined hands. The result was that the custom of the South to build with walls was given up and, as once before in Armenia, people began again to build in stone as if with timber. Thus the structural system of the Gothic style grew up. Both raw materials, the stone of the South and the wood of the North, were combined.

Let us make sure of the fact, and rejoice in it, that as

late as the twelfth century there existed in the North of Western Europe—not in the European East or in the Asiatic North—enough popular force to create a new art.

We have so far seen Medieval art only in its second phase, bound to the climate, the raw material, and the people of the North. But in the ordinary sense Gothic is the most prominent and characteristic part of Christian art; and the question now arises—what did the force of Christianity add to the vigour of the North? Was it the will of Court, Church, and monks which gave to this northern art a style of its own?

The answer, as we have hinted before, is to be found in the resultant of a conflict of forces. The Courts on the whole, certainly in the earlier days, were Byzantine: they looked to Constantinople rather than to Rome, as Charlemagne's palace at Aachen clearly shows. The cities were more Northern and Gothic in their taste, and the rich lay citizen began to compete with the Church and the Court in beautifying his native town with Gothic buildings. The monks, on the other hand, and those who went on pilgrimages were inspired by what they saw in Jerusalem and on the way there: vaulted churches built for eternity. It is not by chance, therefore, that we find in Spain, in Lombardy, and Aquitania the first vaulted churches, for it was from there that the most influential bands of pilgrims moved to the East. I have just returned from a little journey through Dalmatia. There, in the Palace of Diocletian, we see one of the first steps in Eastern art. From Antioch to Europe, century by century, the march became quicker, and it was in architecture that the chief force was found which gradually combined with the Celtic and German elements in the Old Christian Art of Europe and finally led to the great amalgamation of Gothic under the fresh inspiration of the North.

Even the Bishop of Rome, when he became the acknowledged chief of all Christendom, had not the power to im-

pose a Roman type of church upon the West. Aquitania, Spain, and Lombardy had their own freedom to choose where they would, and they took the vaulted church from the East.

In the Romanesque style and period the monks counted for most; in the Gothic the cities. The former wished to teach, and used pictorial arts for those who could not read. The latter embodied the abundance of handicraft in the cathedral which represented the whole community. Both monk and citizen built and endowed not for the day but for all time, the former for the glory of the Church, the other with the desire of one city to surpass another. The convents based their power on the authority of the past, the cities trust in a new inspiration. The forward movement is with them, for revolutions or transformations come with time, like birth, youth, maturity, and decline.

The great amalgamation which formed Medieval art came step by step, from north to south, from south to north. The northern man was always longing for the south. He pressed south, first in the Aryan migration, then with the Teutons. In each case he brought much with him and imbibed much of what he found.

The movement from the South to the North is a missionary one, not only in religion but also in all humanistic wisdom. But in the formation of the Gothic style the North was the decisive factor, and when it was established in its northern home it made its way to Italy also.

So long as we see the one tree only, springing from the South, we can give Medieval art a secondary place, because then the flower of European art would be the Renaissance with Raphael, Titian, and Rubens. But when we see the second tree, rooted in the North, then Gothic art is the summit, and Leonardo, Dürer, Michelangelo, Giorgione, Velasquez, and Rembrandt, as well as Gainsborough and Turner, are the champions. And we see, too, a fight in the last few centuries between the natural de-

velopment which these represent, and the will of Church, Court, and Humanism, which stand for a southern type of civilization and art.

We have not been claiming Medieval art as an entirely northern product. Far from it: we acknowledge fully the great influence of the South and East and the powerful will of the Christian organizations. But we maintain that the final result was due to a northern impulse, and we see, throughout the evolution from the fifth century onwards, the impress of the constant Northern artistic values. Finally, I would urge the need of greater attention to the remains of Northern art as a whole. We collect Greek and Roman, Indian and Chinese objects, but we have no understanding of our own North. There is indeed a Germanic museum in Harvard University, but something of wider scope is needed. Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Scandinavian art must all be included. Would that I might live long enough to see such an Institute arise which would do justice to the dominant factor in Medieval art!

IX

THE ART OF THE RENAISSANCE

By H. Glueck

We have seen in earlier chapters that old Christian art and the art of the Middle Ages were composite things: they sprang from various sources and bear evident marks of the different social forces and inspiration which brought them to birth. The art of the Renaissance suggests quite another idea for the subject of the present lecture. 'Renaissance' means regeneration, and regeneration in this phrase means nothing else than the revival of the classic art of Greece and Rome, especially of the form which this art had taken in Italy. It is used in this connexion side by side with the same word used of literature in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is much in the works of art of that period to give colour to the word and the idea which it connotes. There were many subjects in literature, painting, and sculpture which were revived from classical times. But no one would assert that the art of the Renaissance was the same as classic art, so that one could be taken for the other. We are going in this chapter to consider their relation a little more closely, to ask what was derived and what was imported from elsewhere, and we may anticipate our conclusion here by saying that in this period or style of art, as in the medieval, we find on a more detailed examination that the final result, the full-blown flower of the art, is a complex thing, arising from many sources, bringing together in a sort of unity elements due to various races and various streams of social life and thought.

Vasari, who wrote long after the beginning of the period which bears the name, was the first to use it. From him the word 'rinascità' passed into French and all other

European languages, and with the point of view which it denotes, has held sway down to our own time. Gobineau and Burckhardt and all the historians and critics of art knew quite well that the classic element was not the only one which had determined this art; but up to our own time we have all believed, like Vasari in his local patriotism, that this element was the first and essential for the period. The opinion was only possible so long as our science of art was more or less erected on the historical and aesthetic foundations of classic and Italian art.

But what was this Italy where the art and name of the 'Renaissance' were created? It was only a part of a great geographical and historical unity, which contained a Gothic North, a Byzantine East, a Mohammedan South. When we consider that these three were all theatres of new and living evolutions in art, the art we call 'Renaissance' must take on quite another aspect in our eyes, and its foundations will appear much deeper than a momentary intellectual and literary idea.

Let us turn now and consider the art itself in its elements. What were its subjects? The most frequent were Christian ideas, the holy persons of the Gospels and the legends of the saints. At the beginning, that is, in the fourteenth century, these were given in a representative manner, such as we know in Byzantine art, but soon the conception becomes more familiar and intimate: the Holy Virgin becomes more and more the mother of a family, playing with her child in the manner of German and Dutch art. And we find also more and more traces of genre. Then we recognize that curiously primitive and artless narrative which shows in the same picture events which took place at different times, a common trait in Oriental or orientalized art. There is nothing here either in the subject or its interpretation which belongs to the regeneration of classic art.

It is true that in the middle of the thirteenth century

and later, classical subjects become more and more frequent, but first in a romantic and then in an allegorical, never in a classical manner. Take even such a romantic picture as the well-known Primavera by Botticelli. It represents a poem by Politian with Mercury, the three Graces, Flora, &c. The subject is classical, but the figures have a Gothic tenderness which never belonged to Greek or Roman deities. The landscape has trees and leaves which suggest the detailed work of Mohammedan miniatures. Besides this, in all Italian schools from Giotto up to the Mona Lisa of Leonardo and later, we always find some typical features as a remnant of the Byzantine type. There is a realism, too, especially in portrait-painting, which comes from the North and was first developed in the school of Van Eyck.

Classical figures and features there were of course in plenty, and classical elements were plagiarized in architecture. But they were used in quite another formal manner from that of the classical artist. Think of it first in architecture. Brunelleschi and above all Leo Battista Alberti and the great masters who followed them had studied the ruins of classic architecture; yet their buildings could never be confused for a moment with those of a Greek or a Roman. The classic elements such as columns, capitals, and frames, which they even employed in the classical proportions, have never the antique sense. In the classical building they rose high and free and really bore the weighty moulding: now they are pasted on the wall in several short stories like decorative incrustations. And just in this point they followed the principles which were introduced into medieval art from the East. Apart from a few exceptions, as by Palladio and his followers, this paste-on style remained in post-Renaissance art down to our time.

Of the painters it was Mantegna who most closely studied and followed the classic style, as you can see in

the Triumph of Caesar or the fresco-paintings in Padua. Both in the architecture and the shaping of the human body and the management of the light you have reminiscences of the fresco-paintings at Pompeii. But in the perspective and the arrangement of the figures there are clear traces both of the Byzantine manner and of the Dutch and German schools. The geometrical system of perspective seems to have come from Arab sources, and we find it also in the organization of the masses of figures. Their expressive freedom of outline is northern, their melodious rhythm recalls Byzantine art, and they are grouped in triangles, circles, and other geometrical shapes which give the mathematical calm of the Oriental spirit.

We will try now to trace the evolution of the 'Renaissance' style in some of its examples, taking special note of the three great streams which we have mentioned above and which have not generally received the attention they deserve.

Take the first great architectural work of the Renaissance, the cupola of Brunelleschi in Florence. The cathedral itself is a Romanesque building begun at the end of the thirteenth century, modified and continued in the fourteenth by Talenti and Giotto who planned the charming Gothic campanile.

Is Brunelleschi's cupola a classical feature? Can we see in it the 'Renaissance' of the Pantheon in Rome? Note the differences, which are fundamental. The cupola of the Pantheon is a hemisphere set on a cylinder which can hardly be seen at all from the outside. The cupola of Brunelleschi is an octagonal dome, built in two shells with a brick grate connecting them both. Outside it rises high, with pointed arches formed by moulded ribs. These pointed ribs, rising sharply up, we recognize at once as Gothic elements. The cupola itself, raised on a sort of drum, was common enough in later Byzantine architecture and had already been imitated in St. Mark's of Venice.

But the special type of construction which Brunelleschi used—the double shells and pointed ribs with brick grates —was a feature in Mohammedan architecture at the beginning of the fourteenth century, as may be seen in the tomb of Chodabende-Ehan in Sultanieh in Persia. If we wonder at first that Brunelleschi should have borrowed from Mohammedan art, let us remember that Italy was surrounded on east, south, and west by Islamic monuments, and that the cathedral itself and the neighbouring baptistery have many Mohammedan elements in the incrustation of window-frames and walls.

But there are still more surprising facts in other buildings erected by Brunelleschi. His chapel for the Pazzi family shows a rectangular ground-plan with a cupola in the middle and two narrow wings on both sides, a small square room at the back, and a vestibule with five columns in front. There is no such plan anywhere in Christian Europe before, but it is a common one in the Mohammedan world. We find it from the thirteenth century onward in Turkish buildings in Asia, and we find it also in the Mohammedan West, in some of the apartments, for instance, in the Alhambra. When we add that the whole plan of the Pazzi Chapel is based on the geometrical principles of the Golden Section, then the Mohammedan origin of this curious scheme seems beyond all doubt. It is significant that while it was developed to a high pitch of excellence in Ottoman architecture, as in the monumental mosques of the great Turkish master Sinan, it was not carried on in the later European evolution.

A second example, the greatest of all in Renaissance and European architecture, St. Peter's in Rome, leads to similar results.

It is not a result of the European tradition; it cannot be called a 'regeneration' of the classic style. The plan was first drawn by Bramante and afterwards altered by Michelangelo. It is true that there are many details in the

Alinari

INTERIOR OF THE PAZZI CHAPEL, FLORENCE

Brunelleschi

planning which are drawn after the ruins of old Roman buildings and put together. But the idea of the whole scheme and construction is not Renaissance and is not European. The symmetrical, square circumference, the transverse equal-limbed cross in it, the central tamboured cupola set on piers, and the four diagonal cupolas, all these belong in plain and simple form to the Eastern churches and you find them in a more developed form in Turkish art, as in the Tschinili-Kiosk of 1466 and in the great mosques of Constantinople. So the church of St. Peter, like the Pazzi chapel, belongs to an ordered evolution which took place outside Italy and outside Europe.

The question rather presses itself upon us how in such a foreign evolution the old domestic classical elements assumed the importance that they did. Well, we have to remember in the first place that the classic elements were never entirely lost during the Italian Middle Ages, and that their employment in Renaissance art was rather archaeological and conscious.

And then, beyond and above all this, we have to imagine that flowing together of the two great foreign architectural principles, the Oriental with its decoration of plain surfaces, and the constructive, up-growing system of Gothic art which avoided the wall-plane in favour of structure in single limbs.

Into this new composite order the old classical elements make their way with something of novelty, something of fresh interest and authority.

The northern influence was stronger in sculpture and painting than it was in architecture. We know that Giovanni Pisano took his models and dramatic spirit from the highly developed northern stone and wood sculpture. Donatello begins with his stone David of 1411 in quite a Gothic spirit, and even his most classical works, such as the bronze David, are more Gothic than classical in their stiff and angular lines. On the other hand the decorative

details of the chancel in the cathedral of Florence are carried out in the Oriental manner of incrustation and mosaic such as we know it in walls, pulpits, and so on, in the orientalized churches of southern Italy. Finally, in the later works he takes up a realistic and agitated style only limited by geometrical forms.

Let us look for a moment at painting. It was Byzantine art from which the first great masters of the Renaissance, Cimabue, Giotto, and the other early schools, descended. The decorative use of gold is a Byzantine feature, and this we find still later in the paintings of Fra Angelico, Gozzoli, and the Sienese and Venetian schools, and in the 'Disputa' of Raphael. The type of face and figure continues also; and to appreciate this one only has to remember the face of Christ as it remains to our own days: it is not a classic but an oriental, Byzantine type. Finally, the whole of that melodic rhythm which we admire in the works of the great masters of the Renaissance, especially in the outline of Raphael and the colour of the Venetians, would not have been possible without the fine decorative feeling in line and colour which came to so high a pitch in the Byzantine mosaics of Venice and Sicily.

Of course the Byzantine factor is not the only one. In painting it was the Dutch who brought a northern style to Italy in portraits and the delineation of space. Often the whole idea of the composition suggests a northern origin, as in a very interesting picture by Ghirlandajo where he brings in, on the background on the left, a town containing a column, a pyramid, and a large, round building like an arena. These are the most characteristic buildings of Rome, the column of Trajan, the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and the Colosseum. Yet the town is not meant to be Rome; it is only a symbol for a town in general. Here it means Bethlehem, as we find it in East Christian painting; and in contrast to this scheme the whole remaining landscape is a purely naturalistic one, but not Italian, for it

MOHAMMED II

From the painting by Gentile Bellini

National Gallery, London

presents a gulf with towns and harbours and churches of which the pointed towers are Gothic. The whole composition has no middle-ground, and suggests, with its two leading figures above, the varied works of Van Eyck and Rogier.

Thus a relation between Italy and the North can be gradually made out, and there is a similar one between Italy and Turkey. We know that Gentile Bellini and the sculptors Bellini and Pasti visited Constantinople, and that Michelangelo was invited thither. When we hear of these personal relations and visits we are apt to think, owing to our traditional prepossession with the primacy of the West and especially of Italy in the arts, that the western artists brought European influences to bear on the East: we overlook the fact that they may have received as much, or even more, than they gave. But artists generally, like men of science at an earlier period, journeyed to the East when they could, and looked to the East for inspiration. So it was with Dutch and German artists and scholars. Bellini himself copied Mohammedan miniatures, and all the mechanical arts in Italy—faience, metal, arms, jewellery, inlaid wood—were for the most part Oriental or orientalized. The paintings themselves are full of Oriental carpets, stuffs, brocades, wrought in Italy but with Mohammedan patterns. Here, for instance, is a piece of tapestry of the fifteenth century. A connoisseur of Oriental art would hardly believe that this representation is a European one. It looks like a Persian miniature, but it was made in Burgundy. The same is true of the famous prayer book illustrated by Albrecht Dürer for the Emperor Maximilian in 1430. It mingles panel and frame, animal and fairy-tale in that curious unsymmetrical way which is typical of Persian manuscripts. You may in fact go farther East still, and find the same style in Japan from the beginning of the thirteenth century. There is a strong touch of Oriental pomp in the courtly and chivalrous art of

the fifteenth century in the West. The 'Livre d'Heures' of the Duc de Berry shows the Virgin not in the majestic, unapproachable manner of Byzantine art, not in the homely guise of German works, but surrounded by maids of honour and the Three Kings, with a hunting-leopard which came into fashion in European courts from the East.

To sum up quite briefly, the Renaissance in art was not a movement which arose only in Italy and from classical sources. The classical element is due to Italy, where it had never vanished. What was new about it in Italy at that time was the conscious reintroduction of classical elements, stimulated by the humanist spirit in literature. The vital movements took place in the North, in France and Germany, and in the East, in Byzantium and Islam. Through these new developments which converged on Italy, she obtained her high rank in art at that time, for she was a natural link between the Western and Eastern evolutions. And the power of the courts which counted for so much in art was in a very wide sense international, for it drew its inspiration not only from European sources but from farther east than Byzantium or Asia Minor. It introduced into the West material and spirit drawn in full measure from Persia, China, and Japan.

X

ITALIAN ART OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

By Mrs. Arthur Strong

Art is the expression of ideas, and can only be explained in relation to the current of religious and speculative thought which inspired it. The disregard of this vital principle adds to the difficulty of understanding such complicated periods as the Renaissance and the Baroque. In art-criticism less than in any other field of intellectual activity is it possible to be aprioristic. Rather than first form criterions and then mercilessly condemn all that does not conform to them, the student must learn to see the art of each period with the eyes of the men who created it or at least with those of the men for whom it was created. Nowhere is this more necessary than in the period of Italian art between Michelangelo's ceiling frescoes in the Sixtine Chapel and the death of Bernini in 1680. It was a period rich in new spiritual experience; it was also the last time in European history that art appears as an essential moment of the life of the spirit, at once the powerful ally of the Church and the faithful interpreter of religious thought.

I

The religious and humanistic traditions of Italy imposed upon her art the representation of the human figure. Whereas Eastern art has been mainly inspired by a religion of immanence and passivity, the art of the West tended from the first towards the exaltation of humanity. Greek anthropomorphism by giving a human form to the gods had allowed man to reign supreme over Greek art. Roman art, again, had, by commemorating his *res gestae*, exalted

man as builder and upholder of the city-state, and given us in the apotheosis of the emperor a conception uniting in one single man-god the world, the state, and the family.

But if classical art was thus essentially humanistic, nevertheless man had to wait until the advent of Christianity for his final elevation in art. What was still needed was the reality of the Christian Incarnation to enrich and transfigure the ancient conception of interacting human and divine forces. We no longer have here, as in the apotheosis, a man raised to the level of the gods leaving humanity far below him. It is the living God, who, by taking upon Himself the body of man, embraces humanity in its entirety.

Yet the dogma of the God Incarnate which so profoundly transformed all ancient speculations as to the relations of God to man, failed to take immediate possession of art. The obstacles to be overcome were many. At the outset Christianity, by adopting the Judaic prohibition of graven images, fostered within itself contradictory tendencies, amounting to a dualism, between its desire for expression in art and its dread of the means of expression. At the same time a still sharper dualism was destined to arise from the contact with Paganism, since the early Christians naturally considered ancient art, and particularly sculpture, from its close association with the Pagan ritual of the *imago*, as a dangerous enticement towards the ancient creeds. In the end a compromise was effected. The Christians felt obliged to reject sculpture, which had given corporeal form to the gods, whereas painting, recognized as materially incorporeal, found favour in their eyes on account of what we may call its more mystical quality. This preference for one material over the other left its trace upon the whole development of Western art. It accounts for the almost total disappearance of sculpture in the old Pagan centres during the first centuries of the Christian era. Not till the Carolingian period could it

blossom once more under the tutelage of architecture in the Romanesque schools, whose chief development, however, was beyond the Alps. Upon Romanesque sculpture followed the Gothic, which at its best has a marked affinity to the archaic Greek. But in Italy, though we do not forget the Cosmati and the Pisani, or the great group of Quattrocentist sculptors, we may say that statuary had to wait until Bernini before it was allowed full play; even a born sculptor like Michelangelo was denied the opportunity of expressing his thought completely in the medium that suited his genius best.

Another obstacle was destined to be now the most fertilizing and now the most paralysing for the life of the spirit and of art: humanism—in itself the synthesis of the Pagan and Christian worlds and not a mere return to Paganism—had to encounter the most determined opposition from those mystical forces which under the form of asceticism had coexisted with Christianity from the beginning. The mystical and negative principle of asceticism may well be necessary and salutary so long as it maintains a restraining attitude towards art (as in St. Bernard, in St. Dominic, and St. Francis, and in Plato in antiquity). But it may become a danger, as at the time of the controversy over images; or a disturbing factor, as in that of Savonarola; and may finally degenerate into Puritan fanaticism and effectively bring about the destruction of art.

II

In the fifteenth century the problems raised by these shifting dualisms were still acute; they weighed heavily upon the mind of the artist and accounted largely for that complexity in their art which certain critics put down too exclusively, as I think, to the working of exotic influences. Nevertheless, by this time art already expresses the human and divine values of life by means of the human figure with a liberty due to the essential universality of its

thought, tempered to an individual consciousness which towards the close of the Quattrocento was becoming pronounced in artists of the type of Signorelli and Piero della Francesca. By now, too, those decorative and landscape details which had threatened to compromise the supremacy of the human figure were being gradually disciplined. In the earlier Renaissance it is undeniable that landscape, enriched moreover by motives coming from the East, had exerted an overwhelming attraction, but in the long run landscape was not allowed to interfere with the development of Italian figure art any more than had the rich systems of ornament borrowed from the East been able to choke or—to use the now classic phrase—'to smother in their embrace' the representation of the Roman *res gestae.*

Art had to be freed from many bonds, and to pass through a long process of elaboration before the human figure could finally establish its sovereignty over the world of formal expression. This was gradually accomplished by events of the most various order, among which the preaching of Savonarola must be reckoned as of paramount significance. Savonarola preached not against art but against the waste of it in the service of any but the highest ideals. He thus encouraged a group of artists—Michelangelo among the number—to renounce all but the severer aspects of their calling and to become close interpreters of religious thought. Again, the invention of printing made it possible for art to drop a large measure of its illustrative and narrative function and devote itself to the expression of transcendent ideas. Fra Angelico—in his later Roman period—Masaccio, Piero della Francesca, and Signorelli are all imbued with the new spirit.

The change that now took place can be understood better than elsewhere in the Sixtine Chapel by comparing the Biblical episodes painted for Sixtus IV in the years 1481–3 with Michelangelo's story of the Creation executed

for Julius II between 1508 and 1512. In the Sixtine Chapel Michelangelo appears not merely as a great decorator but as expressing ideas which were at the very root of contemporary thought. Julius II, who insisted upon his undertaking the work and who overcame all Michelangelo's reluctances, had recognized in him the man who was likeliest to make manifest the new intellectual and spiritual needs which, however mutely as yet, were stirring in the Church. Michelangelo had not only listened to Savonarola; he had also been familiar from early youth with Dante's sublime speculations concerning sin and regeneration; no one, therefore, could better co-operate with the Pope whose sole aim was to restore the earthly prestige of the Church, and whose last act was to convene the Lateran Council of 1512. His indomitable spirit, says L. Pastor, and the equally kingly soul of the great sculptor have been carved into the Moses designed by Michelangelo to adorn the tomb of the pontiff. The fruits of their collaboration are no less evident in the ceiling of the Sistina.

The first suggestion for the ceiling was a row of Sibyls and Prophets, a theme popular at the period as symbolizing the humanistic idea of the reconciliation of Paganism with Christianity. Taken by itself, however, it was too meagre to satisfy either Michelangelo or the Pope, and they determined to expand the design into a panorama of man's creation and fall. Here was an opportunity for the disciple of Savonarola to unfold his Biblical visions and for the born sculptor to carry out a decorative scheme, sculptural in intention and designed as the apotheosis of the human figure in plastic art.

Michelangelo responded to the call with the eagerness of genius. For the old narrative of the days of creation he substituted a philosophic view, which left him free to focus attention on man and to suppress as irrelevant to his conception all lesser incidents of the creation. A wind-

blown fern suffices him to suggest the fruitfulness of the earth. Where Michelangelo wishes to enrich his subject he does it not by introducing floral or geometric ornament but by bringing in still more human figures; examples are the so-called *adolescents* or *atlantes*, which he places on plinths at the corners of his five smaller ceiling compositions and the couples of children like caryatids supporting the plinths. Similarly, in the tondo of the Holy Family in Florence he fills up the background with nude figures which we find it difficult to account for, although doubtless the artist could have given us the key to his thought. The nude, however, was by no means his sole preoccupation; like the Greeks and all great masters of the figure, he possessed a profound understanding of drapery and costume, though always using these to contribute to his sense of the universal. In his Sibyls, for instance, he rejects as so much superfluous detail the ornaments and attributes which had delighted a past generation. To quote Émile Mâle, 'he began by depriving the Sibyls of their swords, their horns of abundance, their garlands of flowers, and their robes of gold; he then clothed them in a superhuman dress which seems to transcend all notion of time and arouse the idea of eternity'. His power of inventing costumes appropriate to his characters was unique. To numberless examples on the Sixtine ceiling we may add the armour of the Medici dukes and the strange head-dress that overshadows the face of the Penseroso. These are not imitated from antique cuirasses or helmets, but like the garments of the Sibyls are 'superhuman' creations of the artist's brain.

But however grandly conceived the draperies, the garments, or the armour, which Michelangelo invented in order to accentuate his thought, it remains true, as Berenson says, that 'his passion was the nude, his ideal power'. This is already evident in the nudes of the ceiling, but Michelangelo was destined to find opportunity still more

NUDE, BY MICHELANGELO

In the Sixtine Chapel, Rome

ample for making manifest his absolute control over the nude human figure as a means of doctrinal expression.

Twenty-three years after the ceiling, when the world was shaken by deepening troubles and the Church had seen one part of Europe withdraw from its spiritual empire, Michelangelo was again summoned—this time by Clement VII—to formulate a second version of universal order.

And as already upon the Sixtine vault, so in his Last Judgement he exploits the human form, but advances beyond his first conception in availing himself of all the terrific splendour of the nude, and in so doing far outstrips even the audacious inventions of Signorelli in the Cappella Nuova at Orvieto. To his mind the nude alone could express a sublime catastrophe on a cosmic scale. He built up, it is said, his vision of the final destinies of man to the strains of the *Dies Irae*, and only the nude could give actuality to the phrase poignant of the medieval hymn—

Judex ergo cum sedebit
Quidquid latet apparebit.

Besides the Virgin, who appears clad in her traditional blue, there is only one clothed figure in the whole composition. This is the cowled friar Savonarola seen on the left, as he rises from the grave to witness the fulfilment of his prophecies.

III

While Michelangelo was thus interpreting the Creation, the Fall, and Redemption of Man in terms of a drama of human destiny, another great artist was preparing his version of the reconciliation between the two Wisdoms. In the Stanze which he painted for the same Julius II, Raphael, when called upon to interpret the conception which should have restored perfect harmony to the universality of the Church, struck a very different note from that of Michelangelo. The latter had revealed the troubled conscience of the century, but Raphael, rising above the

contemplation of conflicting principles, shows us the eternal mission of the Church symbolized in the central dogma of the Catholic faith and resting upon the three legacies of antiquity: jurisprudence, philosophy, and poetry. In the fresco of the Stanza della Segnatura, inopportunely known as the 'Disputa del Sacramento' (for nothing is calmer or more harmonious) he conveys this truth in a magnificently centralized composition, wherein the figures of the Father and the Son, with the Dove of the Holy Spirit beneath them, superposed on a vertical line, form a scheme which unfolds itself in incomparable fashion. And at the same time he unites, with a simplicity and force which would be abrupt in another, the dogma of the consubstantial Trinity with that of the eternal Presence in the Eucharist; between the threefold Godhead and the manifold hosts of humanity stands the monstrance, and this narrow circle, like a ring wherein the most opposite terms unite and coalesce, resolves all dualisms ancient and Christian.

Around the monstrance and on either side of the altar open out those infinite spaces wherein the contrast between the two great masters of the Cinquecento is most noticeable. Where Michelangelo would have eliminated from his settings every associated idea, Raphael is careful to sustain in his the note of actuality. In the 'Disputa' he arranges his figures on the pavement—as yet unfinished—of the new St. Peter's and suggests a distant view of the Roman Campagna, with its little grey farms and copses that here and there remind us of human activities.

Raphael shows an equal power over architectural perspective in the 'School of Athens' as over aerial in the 'Disputa'. His command over the superficies to be decorated is twofold; he knows how to co-ordinate the sequences of planes in the ideal third dimension without losing the two-dimensional continuity of his picture-surface. The effect is one of incomparable richness and harmony. Upon

this mastery of the movements of the figure in space followed a new control of those of the spirit: with the St. Cecilia, for instance, listening to the music of the heavenly choirs or in the central figure of the Transfiguration lifted from earth by an irresistible interior power, Raphael anticipates Bernini and brings ecstasy as distinct from emotion into the formative arts With the introduction of ecstasy as a theme of art, the human figure was invested with new potentialities, which, however, did not at once find their full realization.

IV

At the close of the sixteenth century a reaction took place. It amounted to a reversal of the functions of painting and sculpture as the result apparently of the liturgical regulations of the Council of Trent. To make what now happened clear a short digression is necessary. Painting, which had continued to be the medium preferred for representational purposes, suffered most from Trent's doctrinal censures, and in Italy we may say that it never quite recovered its ancient prestige. Outside Rome, it is true, in centres not so immediately affected by the new tenets, it flourished with little intermission. In Venice, Titian's grandiose output only ended with his long life (1477–1576); Paolo Veronese (1528–88) likewise continued active to his death; and Tintoretto (1518–94), the last of Italy's great religious painters, fills the century with his genius. At Parma, Correggio (1494–1534) was discovering new decorative schemes by a new manipulation of light and atmosphere, which became the main factor in the grandiose ceiling-painting of the seventeenth century (Pietro da Cortona, 1596–1669; Baciccio, 1639–1709; Fratel Pozzo, 1642–1709).

In the Rome of the sixteenth century, after Michelangelo and Raphael, painting had fallen into the hands of the 'mannerists', who were mainly employed in covering

the walls of palaces and villas with their huge compositions. The record would be monotonous enough but for the apparition of Caravaggio (1569–1609), an innovator of genius whose convex schemes of composition and dramatic use of light and shadow were combined with a power of imaginative interpretation akin to that of Rembrandt. Like the great Dutchman, Caravaggio was penetrated with the reality of life and of suffering. The desolation of sorrow has never been more poignantly expressed than in the 'Death of the Virgin' (Louvre) or in the 'Entombment' (Vatican); while in the 'Crucifixion of Peter' at S. Maria del Popolo he settles a formal problem which had baffled even Michelangelo. His influence may be traced in all the painters of his time and after. It was strong in Naples and Sicily where he worked in the last years of his life. Through Ribera's agency it travelled to Spain, where his powerful chiaroscuro affected Velasquez as in Holland it affected Rembrandt.

There were great painters in Italy down to the eighteenth century. Besides Caravaggio another significant personality was the Urbinate Baroccio (1528–1612), a consummate colourist strongly influenced by Correggio and Raphael; his religious pictures—the 'Santa Michelina' (Vatican) or the 'Visitation' of the Chiesa Nuova—form a link between the mystical sentiment of Raphael and that of Bernini. Of still later artists we need only mention the Venetian Tiepolo (1696–1770), whose mural paintings and great altar-pieces revived the glories of Paolo Veronese. But notwithstanding the sporadic appearance of men of genius and the vastness of the output, painting after the sixteenth century ceased to be the dominant art of Italy; its spiritual content was gradually becoming exhausted and its impulse spent.

Yet the sixteenth century itself had been rich in new developments. Raphael's mastery of receding planes and the successful attempts of the Venetians (and more espe-

cially Tintoretto) at conquering the spatial problem had issued in the total negation of the picture-plane; the outcome was what Mr. Fry well defines as the 'diagonal into-the-picture-space method of the Baroque', i.e. they cut obliquely from the surface, thus abolishing all intermediate parallel planes. An illimitable depth was thus obtained within which the human figure, whether singly or in groups, could assert its value as a plastic unit without losing its relation to its setting. Generally speaking, Spain and the Netherlands profited most from these ideas. Rembrandt (1606–69), a Protestant Dutchman, rose through the force of his genius above the cramping circumstances of his Puritanical surroundings to become the greatest painter in a style that had been evolved out of Catholic thought. 'None', says Mr. Fry, 'denied the flatness of the picture-plane more resolutely than he, none created depth into the picture-space more convincingly.' In his magnificent paintings and etchings of Biblical scenes, Rembrandt used the method to the same purpose as Rubens and the great Spanish painters in their representation of saintly ecstasies and martyrdoms. When we come to the Italian sculpture of the seventeenth century we shall see that Bernini—with the different material at his disposal—equals and even surpasses his contemporaries in his sense of plasticity and in his control of depth.

In the second half of the sixteenth century sculpture, as compared with painting, was being gradually reinstated and held in readiness to be the sovereign medium of expression in the ensuing period. Because its liturgical use had been more limited sculpture was left to develop without doctrinal interference. It continued to find its chief scope in the decoration of tombs: those of the popes especially were invested with a new splendour that flatly contradicts all that has been said of the sobering effects of the Council of Trent. Paul III, who summoned the council, lies in the apse of St. Peter's beneath a Michel-

angelesque sarcophagus, while in S. Maria Maggiore, sumptuous side-chapels were opened to hold the tombs of four of the great popes of the Counter-Reformation. In the earlier of the two (the Sixtine) the Dominican Pius V and his successor the Franciscan Sixtus V, though both sons of orders that took poverty for their guiding principle, rest in tombs lavishly adorned with statues and reliefs, whose magnificence sinks the individual, in order to bear witness to the universal power of the Church as manifest in the person of the Pope and in the *res gestae* of his pontificate.

The demand for sculpture was so great that sculptors beyond the Alps—notably from the Netherlands—were attracted to Italy by the prospect of employment, and left traces of their somewhat finicking manner on various bas-reliefs and marble altar-pieces carved to imitate painting. The combination of this northern method with the Florentine style of pictorial relief descended from Ghiberti developed into the elaborate pictures in marble of the seventeenth century of which a famous example is Algardi's 'Attila' in the basilica of St. Peter.

At the close of the sixteenth century, however, what sculpture needed was a centre of inspiration. Rome was once more to provide this in a fresh intuition of life, unparalleled for its spiritual fervour since the foundation of Christianity, or its intellectual consolidation in medieval Europe. A new body of sanctity had arisen to help the Church in fighting revolt, and the Church called upon art to make visible this new phase of her life in the mystical experience of her saints.

V

The movement was focused in the work of Bernini (1599–1680), who continued the great tradition of Michelangelo and Raphael and rounded off their vision. He is the leader and chief figure of the movement still labelled

as *Baroque*, which whatever the precise original meaning of the word suggests something eccentric and bizarre, the fruit not of tradition but of reaction. This false conception can only be removed by striving to understand the process of development that links Bernini to his predecessors. Bernini availed himself to the full of the accumulated experience he found to his hand, and bent it to new usage by his creative genius. Like Raphael and Caravaggio he can use the diagonal with magnificent effect (St. Teresa, Longinus); he can substitute space for a figure as the central motive of his composition (as in the *Noli me tangere* of SS. Domenico e Sisto); above all he profits by the oblique method of composition, and never loses his sense of plastic continuity even when decorating a wall-surface (*Cathedra Petri*).

Bernini, like Michelangelo, was a born sculptor, but more fortunate than his predecessor he was able to use the medium that best suited his genius right through his long life. His first work of any significance, the David (1622), reveals him as already in the maturity of his power at the age of twenty-four. The subject was a favourite one in Italian sculpture, and it is only natural to compare the attitude of Michelangelo and Bernini towards the same theme. So long as art is a matter for study and discussion there will always be critics to affirm the intellectual superiority in the grave look and sober mouth of the Michelangelesque statue over the knitted brows and tightly compressed lips of Bernini's. But such an appreciation is intellectual rather than aesthetic; if we compare the two works from the latter standpoint we must inevitably admit that the dramatic expression of Bernini's David reveals a power and a freedom to which Michelangelo had hardly attained. Analogous comparison might easily be made between the Dawn on the Medici tomb and the St. Theresa in ecstasy. In Michelangelo's figures the flame of passion has consumed the individual

and particular and fused the elements into a new substance, while Bernini's are still molten and incandescent with emotion; Michelangelo leaves the spectator to imagine the forces that have been at work; Bernini has the courage to show us the process in action.

The Apollo and Daphne, executed the year after the David (1623), is probably the most imaginative interpretation of a classical subject that Christian art has given us. Bernini goes straight to the heart of the Ovidian story in showing the young god's awestruck pause as he realizes that the tree he is even now clasping holds the soul of his beloved. He remains the same close interpreter of the antique in the river-gods and the Tritons of his numerous fountains. But his greatest achievement is at St. Peter's, where he also had his greatest opportunity. In this immense basilica sculpture was eminently appropriate; and as had happened in the Gothic period—with which the Baroque presents so many affinities—it made its way in as the ally of architecture. Bernini imparted life to the great church by introducing the human figure wherever it seemed needful to emphasize the structural design. By his threefold mastery of architecture, sculpture, and composition in space he gave the necessary importance to the Baldacchino under Michelangelo's dome. The twisted columns which he substituted for straight shafts give the structure an air of lightness without sacrificing the effect of height, and the four great winged figures placed as sentinels at the corners of the canopy at once complete the ascensional movement of the columns and impart a sense of stability to the whole.

The altar-piece which Bernini constructed at the end of the apse to contain the fragments of the chair of St. Peter is likewise as much architectural as sculptural. The whole design is solidly built up between and against the two central pillars of the apse; the window becomes a rift in the clouds through which the Dove of the Holy Spirit

descends in the midst of a glory of sunbeams and of angels; the chair borne upon the clouds and directed by the Dove floats gently down towards earth; while lower still the Fathers of the Church, who are present not, as has been said, to support the chair but to herald it, form a broad base for the composition and a relief to the eye from the architectonic forms of the chair itself. Like Michelangelo, Bernini builds upon a scheme geometrical in its severity. So rhythmically graded are the choirs of angels that accompany the descent of the chair, so perfectly balanced the bronze groups at the base of the composition, that however he may pack his spaces with figures there is no sense of confusion or overcrowding. In this he resembles Michelangelo in the Last Judgement.

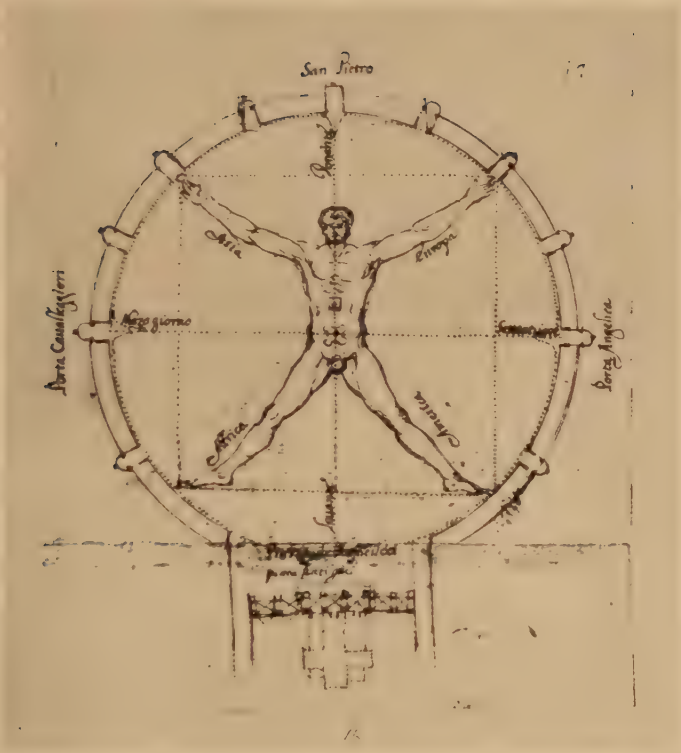
In the exquisite tabernacle of gilt bronze executed for the Capella del Sacramento, Bernini masks the heightened drum with admirably chiselled figures of the twelve Apostles which, like the angels of the Baldacchino, resume the vertical movement of the columns above the horizontal architrave. This was a favourite device of the Seicento which Bernini had previously used with dramatic effect in the colonnade that forms, as it were, the forecourt of the great church. Though not executed by Bernini himself, the statues were designed by him; and the fecundity of his genius is nowhere more evident than in his intuition of the character proper to each saint and in his adjustment of each figure to its position. The statues rise like tongues of flame above the massive columns, whose movement they continue upward into the infinity of space, thus removing what might be the monotonous or heavy effect of the huge architrave upon which they stand. But Bernini's sense of the architectural possibilities of the human body in relation to his ring of columns does not end here; his whole conception of the curving colonnade is based—as extant drawings show—upon the principles of a figure with arms extended forward and having the

cupola for its crown, in veiled allusion perhaps to the mystical Body of Christ standing there—

> With arms wide open to embrace
> The coming of the human race.

The influence upon art of the God Incarnate could go no further. This may seem fanciful, but the principle reasserts itself in many of the incurved fronts and porches of Baroque churches, and modern scholars have found here a parallel both in structure and idea to the deeply recessed portals of the Gothic cathedrals.

So great a master of human form and expression as Bernini was naturally a portraitist of the first order, and not even his bitterest detractors have questioned the vigour of interpretation and modelling in such busts as the Cardinal Scipione Borghese or the Francesco d'Este at Modena. He was also the greatest interpreter of the skeleton since the French sculptors of the thirteenth century; the skeleton on the monuments of Urban VIII or of Alexander VII show his grasp of the artistic possibilities of the subject, which to him represented the armature of the human body. But I do not propose to attempt even to indicate the manifold aspects of his genius. We have recently been told that Bernini is now given his due share of praise and that it is no longer necessary to defend him. In the present connexion it is enough to draw attention to him as the last great Italian who, working on the old basis of humanism, conveyed by the means of figure-art his sense of the divine union between God and man. As Raphael and Michelangelo had asserted the mission of the Church in terms of the Bible and of theology, so Bernini exhibited the organic process of development in its fullness, and summed up all previous visions in a universal ecstasy: the 'St. Francis lifted heavenward by angels' at S. Pietro, in Montorio, the *Noli me tangere*, the St. Teresa at S. Maria della Vittoria, and—to mention one of his



BERNINI: DESIGN FOR THE PIAZZA OF ST. PETER'S

From Richard Norton's 'Bernini and other studies'

(By permission of the Macmillan Co., New York)

rare pictures—his rendering of the medieval theme of the Crucifix borne over a sea of blood; all these bear witness to the directness and the force of his mystical intuition. And Bernini is also the last and perhaps the greatest of the classic artists. He always remained primarily a sculptor and handled with incomparable mastery the medium which the Greeks had preferred to all others because of its intellectual possibilities. Thus by a curious working of poetic justice, sculpture, banned by the early Church as a medium of Christian art, recaptured in the hands of Bernini its antique prestige.

. . . . . .

Italian art reached the turning-point of its evolution with the Baroque, which before its decline burst like a rocket all over the civilized world; it affected every Latinized country of Europe from Poland to Portugal, and outside Europe made itself felt even in far-off Mexico,[1] while the art of Protestant countries—and no less so that of England[2]—surrendered to its spell. Wherever it penetrated we find that same passionate respect for the human form and all that this can give to architecture and design, that same conviction that everything based on this form has a greater nobility than that which is not. But the later developments of its principles and their partial abandonment in more modern times belong to another chapter of this book.

[1] For Mexico see especially Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell's illuminating monograph.

[2] For Baroque influence in England see Mrs. Arundell Esdaile's penetrating study, *English Monumental Churches since the Renaissance* (1928).

XI

THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

By A. F. Clutton-Brock

The period which may roughly be called the Seicento, though for our purposes it must include a good part of the sixteenth century as well, was one of upheaval and often of discord, in which many kinds of art were practised, and in which there were many and various approaches to form and to other qualities of pictures. It would be impossible to deal with all the many reputable or notorious painters of this time in so short a survey as this. All that I can hope to do is to comment on a few of the greatest artists of this time, the Baroque painters—Rubens, El Greco, and Rembrandt, and a few others, such as Poussin and Velasquez. I cannot hope to say very much about the proper Seicento painters in Italy, nor fortunately is there very much need for me to do so, since Mr. Roger Fry, in his book *Transformations*, has treated the subject, if not at length, at any rate as completely and well as any one could wish for. Indeed, the whole subject of the Seicento is, in a manner, Mr. Fry's special province and preserve, nor can I help trespassing on it. Moreover, it is undoubtedly difficult to analyse the painters before us and to say anything which Mr. Fry has not said, for his analysis compels agreement, and to disagree for the sake of difference would indeed be foolish.

The Italian painters of the Seicento have lately received a good deal of attention, and in London the Magnasco Society has recently held several exhibitions of their work. This is all to the good, for, ever since the primitives were made much of, their work has been neglected, and painters like Guido Reni, Domenichino, and even Carlo Dolci are very good artists. But the indiscriminate admirers of the

art of the Seicento are, I believe, in part actuated by the social-historical day-dreaming which at intervals makes one period seem unduly fascinating, and a playground for our romantic feelings about the past, so that its works of art receive an exaggerated admiration, owing to which both their real merits and their faults are unseen. Lately, looking over a few reproductions of seventeenth-century Italian pictures, I was struck by the charm which their antiquated melodrama, their artificial religiosity, had for me, prone as I am to the seductions of the social-historical day-dream, which may even go so far as to invest wax fruits in the fantastic dress of Mr. Strachey's eminent Victorians, and surrounds an old green and pink snuff-box with all the imaginary gallantry, cynicism, and wit of an imaginary eighteenth century. The result of all this was that I found it rather difficult to consider these pictures apart from their symbolic interest and their associations, and give them that close attention which as works of art they demand, but which is not in the least necessary when they are considered merely as objects which arouse associations.

The ordinary vision of everyday life commonly does not regard any object whatsoever with any close attention, for when once such an object has aroused an association, which it may easily do at a first glance, then our minds go off after the association and neglect to look any longer at the object. For this reason we should not, I think, consider any associations which a picture, and chiefly its subject, may arouse, since these associations spring up after the most cursory glance, but we should, if possible, be at times quite blind to associations of any kind. If this is true it should lead us to be hopeful about the future of the appreciation of art, since to be obnoxious to associations demands a certain education, a rather wide if rather dilettante education, so that all the various and numerous associations may be already in the mind. The average

member of a great democracy is not very likely to have had such an education, but he may very well have a special sensibility to works of art, and it is fairly easy, demanding only its scrupulous exercise, to cultivate it so that it becomes really useful and a source of the greatest enjoyment.

To return to the Seicento. Dr. Wöllflin has shown that this period was not by any means a direct development of the High Renaissance, but that, on the contrary, in this time there was a complete change of point of view. Perhaps the most noticeable change is in the way of realism, the representation of actual visual appearances. This may be partly due to the Flemish painters, who always excelled in such things as the painting of stuffs, so that it seems as though, if one were to touch their pictures, the very texture of the stuffs would be felt. Mirrors with wonderfully life-like high lights, glasses of water, curious light and shade—these were always of fascinating interest to them, and in representing these things they employed all their talents, carrying out Van Eyck's motto, which so well expresses the spirit of the Flemish painters, *Als ikh Kan*, 'As I can'. They must have given themselves a great deal of pleasure by doing all they could, and they still give a great deal of pleasure. Never was there so much excitement as when a large exhibition of their efforts in this way was held at Burlington House—one of those annual expiations, as some one has called these exhibitions of old masters, which was not, either by luck or cunning, very much of an expiation after all. The Flemish painters began at a later date to communicate with the Italians, and it is likely enough that they left their influence on those whom they went to imitate,[1] although, as we know from Michelangelo's remarks, they were not thought very much of in Italy. Perhaps it is worth while quoting from Michelangelo:

[1] There are, of course, several traces of such influence in the Quattrocento.

The painting of Flanders will generally satisfy any devout person more than the painting of Italy, which will never cause him to drop a single tear, but that of Flanders will cause him to shed many. This is not owing to the vigour and goodness of that painting, but to the goodness of such devout persons. Women will like it especially, very old ones or very young ones. It will please likewise Friars and Nuns, and also some noble persons who have no ear for harmony.

But however much the Flemish may have excelled in the realism which makes one feel that the painted silk would feel like real silk, a realism which in the seventeenth century was not only at the disposal of Flemish painters but of all painters in every country, they were deficient in one most important kind of realism, the realism which produces the illusion that the picture is not a flat surface on which there is a flat design, but a hole in the wall, so to speak, in which solid objects are arranged. This was the particular contribution of Italian art. Since real objects are solid, the power of representing three dimensions is of course very important for the accurate representation of nature. But it is still more important to the artist, as opposed to the representer of nature, since forms arranged in a pattern in three dimensions and not in a flat pattern are likely to be much more complex. It is the complexity of a work of art which determines, not its beauty, but on what level it is to be appreciated. Our appreciation of a pretty plate on which is a pretty pattern is on quite a different level from our appreciation of the Parthenon, because the one work is less complex than the other. We can think of apparent exceptions to this rule—for example, we may seem to appreciate a Sung platter on a different level from a Worcester plate, though both may seem equally simple, and yet we may believe, and it is probably true, that each is perfect of its kind. But if this feeling that we are admiring these two objects on different planes or levels

be justified, we shall probably find that in fact the Sung platter is a much more complex work than the Worcester porcelain plate. The English plate may have one beautiful and satisfactory curve, but it is likely that the curve, the *galbe*, of the Sung platter, will not be a matter of one complete, simple and satisfactory curve but of a harmony of innumerable slight curves each of which modifies the one main curve and keeps it from being symmetrical and simple.

This then is the advantage of the three-dimensional design which was the property of the Italians until their influence spread to other countries. This three-dimensional quality in pictures may be attained by a great many methods. The Florentines often achieved it by a plastic use of colour. Colour is modified by light and shade and by its distance from the spectator, and it is obvious that supposing that the colour of, say, a landscape was quite accurately represented in a picture, then there would be a complete appearance of three-dimensional solidity. But this is almost impossible, and it is at least certain that the Florentines never did achieve such a result. They achieved solidity through colour by a transposition of the tones or colour values, not copying the colours of nature so much as arranging the colours which they selected in a sequence which was, as it were, parallel with the sequence of colours in nature. This could be done, as in Fra Angelico's pictures, even with such unnatural colours as pink and blue. The chief way of making such a sequence of colours parallel to nature was to observe the degree of contrast between two colours on one plane equidistant from the picture plane, and the contrast between two other colours on another such plane. If such a contrast on both these planes was right, that is to say, in some degree parallel to what such a contrast would actually be in Nature, then an effect of recession and solidity would be produced. But this was not the sole method of achieving plastic design which was

THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS

From the painting by Rubens, formerly in the Holford Collection

(By permission of the Executors of Sir George Holford)

in the hands of the Italians. There was also the method of plastic drawing, and accurate feeling for space, not only for the solidity of objects in space but for the solidity of the space in which such objects were set. Raphael's School at Athens is a supreme example of such complete realization of three-dimensional space. As Mr. Fry observes, previous to the Baroque and Seicento painters the method of making lines lead into the picture, away from the picture plane, was little used. The lines are parallel to the picture plane, and solidity is achieved by other methods, by the complete realization of modelling, for example. But the Baroque painters, like Rubens, composed in three dimensions by employing great and sweeping lines leading away from the picture plane.

Here, then, we have the ingredients of Baroque and seventeenth-century painting: the discovery of a great many devices of minor importance in the direction of realism, as can very well be seen in such a painter as Caravaggio, and also the discovery of a new method of composing in three dimensions by the use of lines leading away diagonally from the picture plane. But there is one other very important change, with which perhaps these two other discoveries are correlated, the change in the Seicento from the conceptual idea of natural appearances to the purely visual, for in the Seicento painters came to rely more and more upon the evidence of their eyes alone, and not upon any other data got from any other sources. Children naturally use only their concept of an object when they wish to draw it. If a child is asked to draw a penny he will simply draw a round circle on the paper. But of course it is very rarely that we ever see a penny as a perfect circle. If it is lying on a table before our eyes it is likely to be an oval; if our eyes are on a level with the penny it will be a straight line. When this is recognized we pass from conceptual to visual drawing. Of course the painters of the Renaissance and before used their eyes, but

they did not entirely rely upon their eyes, and they used also what might have been discovered by touch or by some other means. For example, the laws of perspective were carefully discovered and codified by Paolo Uccello and other painters. But a painter who knew nothing of the laws of perspective and only used his eyes might well be able to get his perspective right solely by observing the way in which lines met in the scene before his eyes. And Dr. Wöllflin gives as an example of the reliance of Renaissance painters upon tactual or conceptual data the fact that they always in their drawings found it important under the drapery to get the position of the navel in the figure, although in fact this was not likely to be seen under any drapery. The Baroque painters and the painters of the Seicento rejected most of the conceptual knowledge of form which had been previously acquired and used their eyes only.

It may be objected that Rubens and other similar painters obviously drew from memory, as is shown by their placing figures in positions which no model could assume, and also by the extraordinary number of figures in their pictures. But, nevertheless, an artist who only uses visual data, even when he draws from memory, is likely to show signs of his entire reliance upon visual data and his rejection of conceptual data, and these signs Rubens certainly does show.

There were, then, a great number of new inventions and discoveries made in painting at the beginning of the Seicento, and it remains to be seen what was made of these discoveries. We shall not expect any one school or any very great uniformity of idea among these painters, since a few discoveries were likely to upset any strict tradition, and individual painters made what they were inclined to make out of the discoveries in their hands. We will first begin with Baroque painters proper—Rubens, El Greco, and Rembrandt.

The chief characteristic of Baroque painting, and indeed of all Baroque art, is the idea of a complete and entire unity of design in the whole work of art. In architecture the Baroque style led to a great mass of ornament, because this tended to pull a façade together, and where a house had previously been conceived as, say, three stories, each designed by itself to a certain extent (though also, of course, there was some harmony and agreement between each storey), in the Baroque period a façade was conceived as a whole, partly by the use of a mass of ornament which should break up the division into three storeys made by the lines of windows. So also were Baroque pictures conceived as a complete unit, the design being meant to strike the eye from the very first, with a rapidity which was not hitherto attempted. Not that previous pictures had not been designed as a whole, but the design came slower to the eye, and was built up out of shapes which fitted together in a less agitated relation, so that we may imagine the design as more comparable to music where the pattern is only conceived as a whole after a passage of time, although during that time the parts of the pattern had individually and severally given pleasure. To compare this kind of design with music is to imagine an extreme instance, but we may say that compared with design of the Baroque kind, the design of Renaissance pictures (or what may be called classical design) is more like music in that it does to a certain extent require the passage of some amount of time before they be fully comprehended and enjoyed. The design of Renaissance pictures is, in fact, often like that of the three-storied house which I mentioned. There is a harmony between the three stories, but it is not seen perhaps at the first *coup d'œil*, and the *coup d'œil* is the first and most important consideration in Baroque pictures. Thus in such pictures we do not find figures posed, each in itself elegant, connected in a slow rhythm, and perhaps set in space with a fair amount

of empty space about them, as in Raphael's Marriage of the Virgin, a good example of this classical kind of design. On the contrary, in Baroque pictures the space is crowded, the gestures of the figures are animated and theatrical, the eye is not slowly carried away from the picture plane, as when figures are carefully realized in space, but abruptly led within the picture by a line, often made by some theatrical gesture, which leads away from the picture plane. In Renaissance pictures it is as if a number of beautifully shaped vases, each of which is to a certain extent worth dwelling upon by itself, were placed together so that there each vase echoed in its shape another vase and together they made up a harmony. But Baroque pictures must be observed at one rapid *coup d'œil*; there is no dwelling upon parts of the whole possible, and there is no resting-place for the eye, which must take in everything or nothing.

El Greco is perhaps the most complete, the most uncompromising Baroque painter. He has, we say, a modern appearance, but perhaps this is because he did not in the least care to get any more power to represent natural appearances than was necessary for his special sensibility, and also because he was perfectly willing actually to throw over accurate representation of natural appearances for the sake of his special kind of design. Rubens, on the other hand, had a quite extraordinary command over natural appearances, and a marvellous memory of forms, and thus, though his kind of design is in its essentials the same as El Greco's, allowing of course for all the individual and multiple variations of sensibility, he never distorted natural appearances. If Rubens wished for any gesture which should lead the eye away from the picture plane, he had in his mind the pose—the only pose, perhaps, which would serve this end. So great was his command over memorized natural appearances, his power of drawing figures in absolutely any position from memory, that he

often achieved a greater degree of complexity in his design than El Greco, though this complexity never detracted from the complete unity of the design.

It may well be that this kind of Baroque design came from the rejection of conceptual ideas of natural appearances. The instinct of the designer of patterns allows him to take a number of purely conceptual shapes, such as circles and squares, or if he design in three dimensions, and is a painter, his conceptualized ideas of figures, and form these into a pattern; and if he work from concept alone it is likely that the various shapes which he combines into a pattern will each by themselves be chosen for their individual beauty, as if each were a piece of sculpture. And thus he will get the slower rhythms of classical design, as in Renaissance art, for he will wish the eye to dwell upon his conceptualized forms. But when forms are visualized it is not likely that each of the objects chosen to make up the picture will in themselves have much grace and beauty, since they are taken direct from observation or from memory of nature, and thus the painter will concentrate all his efforts upon the whole design, which he will in consequence wish to make comprehensible at the first *coup d'œil*.

This is particularly evident in the case of Rembrandt. In Rembrandt we have another factor to consider which was not much evident in either El Greco or in Rubens—the painter's sensibility to Nature. Now the main part of the design of a picture—the bones of it, so to speak—comes always, or almost always, out of the mind, and so we may call this main design or structure the intellectual part of the picture, bearing in mind that it is probably not entirely an operation of the intellect but also of sensibility, whatever we may mean by that. Still, to call this part of the picture intellectual is a convenience, for here most evidently is there thought exercised upon sensibility. 'But the intellectual part of the picture is only the skeleton

which has to be clothed, so that the whole may not seem bare like a mathematical solution of a problem, and it is usually clothed in two ways. The smaller details of the picture may be made beautiful or satisfactory in two ways. The painter may have a great deal of sensibility to paint and line and other qualities which are only within the picture, and employing his sensibility wholly upon these qualities he will fill in the bare skeleton, the intellectual part of the picture. In fact every good painter will have a certain amount of this sensibility to qualities of paint and line and so forth, but he may also have sensibility to qualities without the picture, to qualities in Nature. Now supposing the intellectual part of the picture to be exceedingly complex, as in Rubens, it will be almost impossible for the painter to exercise any sensibility to Nature.

This sensibility to Nature must, by the way, be carefully distinguished from the power of representing Nature, and of achieving realism which we mentioned above as being one of the discoveries of painters of the Seicento. Nor is this sensibility the same as the power of remembering forms which Rubens had. Both these other capacities of the painter are not a matter of sensibility, but they are sometimes aids and sometimes hindrances to a painter, whereas sensibility is the *raison d'être* (if we also include the intellectualized sensibility which designs the intellectual part of the picture) of the painter's business.

Now supposing the intellectual part of the picture to be exceedingly complex, as in Rubens, it will be almost impossible for the painter to exercise any great degree of sensibility to Nature. We have only to imagine how impossible it would be for Rubens to have before his eyes a great scene, such as the Rape of the Sabine women, so that his sensibility could extract something from the real scene before him. But if the design be less complex, the painter may work from models before his eyes (or in some cases, as for instance the modern painter Bonnard, keep in his

head what his sensibility has extracted from Nature, and then from memory fill in the intellectual design, which again cannot be done if the main design be very complex). We find in Rembrandt what we had not found in Rubens or in El Greco, abundant traces of sensibility to Nature, though also we find, what we had found in the other two painters, a great deal of sensibility to qualities within the picture. But Rembrandt's sensibility to Nature did not prevent him from making his design completely unified, so that it must at once be appreciated at the first *coup d'œil*, at least in his earlier pictures, though in his later pictures he returns to the classical kind of designing, the slower harmonies of Renaissance art. Rembrandt's designs are not usually so very complex as are Rubens's, nor at first sight so completely intellectualized as in El Greco's pictures, and this may be due to the fact that he made a great deal out of his sensibility to Nature. Yet in a sense his sensibility to Nature may have made him design in a Baroque way, for a painter may extract from Nature any of a great many things, and Rembrandt chiefly saw in Nature a unified and complete web of form, not complex forms in empty space (which is often the content of Renaissance art) but one single complex space. This may be seen particularly in his portraits, which are commonly in other hands an extreme example of the slower kind of classical design, where the head is a shape that is beautiful in itself, it may be, and this shape is to be appreciated as a piece of sculpture, though its relation to the space around it may after a little while be appreciated in the same way as the relation between the three distinct and separate storeys of Renaissance house were to be appreciated. But Rembrandt, partly because of the chiaroscuro which his sensibility extracted from Nature, saw all the scene around the head in a more intimate and immediate relation to the head of his portraits.

Poussin, one of the very greatest of French painters, and

very typical of the French in his uncompromising insistence on form, was an extremely interesting instance of a painter well versed in the Baroque kind of design who returned deliberately to the slower harmonies of classical or Renaissance art. Dr. André Blum mentions the influence of Descartes on Poussin, and his consequent desire to make his art as reasonable as possible. We shall see in the next chapter that Descartes' insistence on reason is a double-edged weapon, and so indeed are any social influences which may act on painters. At any rate, whether it was because classic design seemed to be superficially more reasonable than the somewhat turbulent harmonies of the Baroque style, or for some other reason, there is no doubt that Poussin did return to the classical idea of design. But, nevertheless, he could never be a completely Renaissance artist—for one thing he could not reject the discovery of the use of lines leading away from the picture plane. On the whole, one will notice more lines parallel to than leading away from the picture plane in his compositions, but nevertheless he did not entirely reject the Baroque method. Moreover, though his figures seem at first sight to be conceptualized, since so much which might have been observed in Nature is rejected, it will also be seen that much that might have been got from conceptual data has also been rejected.

Velasquez is a very interesting example of a painter who more and more rejected facts observed visually in Nature. There can be little doubt that at first, and in his earlier pictures such as Las Borrachas, Velasquez was much influenced by Caravaggio. Caravaggio, Mr. Fry has called the first blackleg among painters. The Italian painters of the Seicento often sought to express some highly melodramatic or religious sentiment, but for the most part they took great pains to work as the great painters work, to have style, and never to allow their desire to express some literary idea pervert their sense of

THE SHEPHERDS OF ARCADY

From the painting by Poussin in the Louvre

form. Even Carlo Dolci, the literary part of whose pictures is very obtrusive and often to modern ideas unpleasant, yet insisted upon style and did not sacrifice his interest in form. Caravaggio was one of the first painters to sacrifice everything to description and to expression of a literary idea, two elements in pictures which curiously tend to go hand in hand.[1] How many painters have followed Caravaggio since!

No doubt the great discoveries of the Seicento in the way of realism led Caravaggio to pursue this disreputable course. It is strange indeed that Velasquez should have been influenced by this painter, but of course he always showed a much greater delicacy, much more sensibility, and never neglected the intellectual part of his pictures. Still, at first one would say that Velasquez's earlier pictures are those of an incomparable virtuoso, whose sensibility was nevertheless not smothered by his virtuosity. His later pictures betray no such virtuosity, and we find him rejecting all such description of natural appearances and all his extraordinary power of representation as is not necessary for the expression of his special sensibility. This sensibility, it may be worth mentioning, was of a rather modern kind, in that it was expressed so directly, and no vast machine was erected, as in the case of the Baroque and most of the Renaissance painters, no very complex organization to assist the designer.

It should be said that in attempting to analyse the various methods of designing in all these artists I have taken no account of the many variations from the kind of design which, as a rule, was typical of each man. Not only does the artist arrive at the type of design and method of painting which suits his sensibility only after many years, and is in fact always changing in these respects and

[1] Caravaggio had great talent as an artist, and it is quite possible that he might have excelled his contemporaries had he not thrown over tradition. But this leads us to the problem of free will and predestination.

perhaps developing, but also it will be found that from time to time many artists have designed in a style which was neither particularly characteristic of themselves or of their age. I might instance Rubens's landscapes, which might have been painted in the nineteenth century, so completely orchestrated are they, as few landscapes were before the nineteenth century, and so much concern is there in them with effects of light. Moreover, we can find pictures by Rubens in which he even returns to Renaissance methods of design, as we can certainly find some Renaissance pictures which are singularly Baroque. I have therefore only noticed typical and prevailing methods of design.

In general, then, we may say that the many discoveries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries almost amount to a revolution in painting. It would be interesting if we could find any change in the life, in the most conscious thought of the times, to correspond with the change of art, but unhappily that is what we cannot find. In thought, the ideas of the Renaissance were during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gradually being worked out along much the same lines, and we can see no abrupt change in man's attitude to the universe. Changes there were, of course, but these grew more or less directly out of the peculiar orientation of conscious thought in the Renaissance.

It would seem that the various conditions of art which determine to some extent the nature of the problem before the artist operate and evolve according to their own laws. At times, as in the Renaissance itself, we may see a correspondence between art and the most conscious and best thought of the time, but at other times, as in the Seicento, there seems to have been absolutely no correspondence of this sort. We may then imagine art and thought, life at its most conscious, as two distinct activities, pursued independently of each other, and perhaps with the intention of reaching different goals. At times there is certainly communication between those who are pursuing the one

activity and those who are pursuing the other, but at other times there may be no communication.

Neither may we say, when the one activity is least in communication with the other, that art is bad or feeble. For there are no rules of this sort to be made, and it may be seen that the connexion between art and life will have a bad effect on art, as perhaps in the eighteenth century, and at any rate art may be good or bad according to its own laws, equally and indifferently whether it touch upon life or not. Perhaps for the sake of the body politic we should be best pleased when art and life are in some fairly close communication, but this communication should only be sought for when we wish to weigh and set a value upon the condition of the body politic and not when we wish to know the value of the work or works of art before us. Whether in the end the two activities of art and thought are pursued so that ultimately the same goal is in the mind of those who pursue them, is a hazardous question which I will not venture to raise.

The Eighteenth Century

The Baroque style in painting and architecture now became feeble and lost a great part of its aesthetic purpose. In architecture the Palladian style[1] was sometimes used; and though the Baroque style, with its emphasis on the complete unity of the building, to be perceived at a *coup d'œil*, was not forgotten and left its trace, in general correctness was the aim of most important architects of important buildings, though of course we may find many exceptions. Still, there was in this century a general idea that art might be guided by rules, though the first stirrings of the Romantic revival, of which we will treat in the next chapter, were often contemporary with the most rigidly classical archi-

[1] A style which is comparable to that of Poussin in painting; in which Baroque design is intentionally neglected, but still has its influence.

tects, who thought a great deal of the correct application of the principles of Vitruvius and of the Five Orders.

But we do not find that in other arts than architecture, or for that matter in small and domestic architecture, the artists thought much about correctness. During the eighteenth century we can find some correspondence between art and life, for at this time art kept company with courts, and elegance became more important than anything else. Elegance is a vague word, and we had best qualify it and attempt to define it. It seems to me that when we say that a work of art is merely elegant we are not absolutely condemning it, for we are not denying that it has absolutely no formal qualities. All that we are saying is that an elegant work of art is a work of which the formal qualities, the intellectual part it may be, or the part which is the product of sensibility alone, are not at all complex. We should call the Worcester plate, perfect of its kind, to which I referred, an elegant plate, and we should not call the Sung plate elegant. Now these two works of art were, I have suggested, appreciated on different levels because the one was more complex than the other. And so an elegant work of art seems to be a work of art in which only the simpler formal qualities are attended to. Among such very simple, easily appreciable, formal qualities is the calligraphy of a picture, the elegance of the artist's brush-strokes, which he habitually lays on in a certain way, as every one has his own distinct and individual handwriting with the pen. The artist will try and make his calligraphy of the brush as elegant as possible, for thus an additional beauty may be added to his pictures. But it often happens that such calligraphy, which is always a good thing in itself, though it is but a beauty of each several part of the picture and has not the importance of the beauty which depends upon the relation of every part of the picture, becomes the sole end of the painter, and this is a bad thing. We can see this

in the painter Gainsborough, who of English eighteenth-century painters had the greatest sensibility and was the most genuine artist. Gainsborough's first and earliest pictures show a real and vivid sensibility, not very much power but a good deal of competence in the main design, but still real sensibility in the minor parts of the design. But Gainsborough soon learnt a very charming calligraphy, and whether he himself was so pleased with this calligraphy that he could think of nothing else, or whether it was because of his patrons, who must have been delighted with his calligraphy (since this is one of the most easily apprehended and liked of all true formal qualities), he soon began to neglect his true sensibility, and lost the power to express it as he had expressed it in his earlier works. And we may find another instance, among many others, in Guardi, of an artist who relied on his calligraphy. And so we find that Guardi is a more popular painter than Canaletto.

But it was not only because they emphasized and took most pains with their calligraphy that most eighteenth-century artists deserve only to be called elegant, having learnt to think mostly of elegance at this time from their habitual and almost parasitic dependence upon the aristocracy and courts. There are many other simple formal qualities besides calligraphy, and all these are exhibited by eighteenth-century artists, who lay most emphasis on those which are most easily apprehended and neglect the more important formal qualities. Let us imagine a typical elegant work of the eighteenth century, say a picture by Boucher. Those who are obnoxious to the social-historical sense will of course find much to please them in such a vision of a supremely elegant life, but we will not linger over this pleasure. The main design, the intellectual part of the print, we may notice is easy and obvious; it consists in such a simple and tolerable curve or arrangement of curves as we may notice in the Worcester plate of the eighteenth century. There is of course great multi-

plication of detail, but this neither obstructs nor assists the main design. And in a painting by Boucher there will be the same kind of easy design, which is quite simple and easily grasped, and is not a matter of innumerable complex variations from the simple structure which, it may be, the painter first sketched on the canvas. In the colour of the picture there will be the same easily grasped harmony, probably there will be a good deal of pink and green, which is a contrast of colour particularly vivid and likely to appeal at first sight to those who have not trained themselves very much in the appreciation of colour against colour, so that they may find a beautiful harmony of colour in such outlandish and apparently ugly colours as yellow ochre or dull green. And in all works of art of the eighteenth century, except those of the few greater artists whom we will later briefly mention, there will be found such an emphasis on the less important and most easily grasped formal qualities, to the neglect of the more important and less easily grasped qualities.

And so in the furniture of the eighteenth century and in the minor objects of use, more legitimately we find the same insistence on minor formal qualities. Very little, indeed, is frankly ugly, never is form quite forgotten and, as in the nineteenth century, neglected for some other purpose which is not in the least aesthetic. Perhaps the style which is most devoid of any aesthetic purpose in the nineteenth century is the rococo style as it was taken over from the French and adapted by the Germans, who found this style a very good way of expressing their naïve and childish interest in what may be called toy-making which is characteristic of their race. The good toy-maker is very fertile in little ingenuities and in a complication of detail, but why indeed should he have any interest whatsoever in formal qualities?[1] But in general the

[1] The Germans, by the way, had previously taken over the Baroque style, just as Dürer had taken over the style of Mantegna,

minor formal qualities were the chief preoccupation of the architects and the makers of useful objects in the eighteenth century. Therefore, apart from the fact that this preoccupation with minor formal qualities led to a neglect of major formal qualities, our appreciation of works of art of this century is on a different plane or level from our appreciation of great works of art, because these are much more complex.

As to the domestic architecture of the eighteenth century it is often very satisfactory, and for this there seems to be a reason, for we can connect the success of architecture, or at least of the simpler kinds of architecture, with the predominant emphasis of the artists of the eighteenth century on the simpler formal qualities. A great deal of architecture, not perhaps the finest or the most magnificent kinds of architecture, is, I believe, quite rightly a matter of a simpler kind of harmony than pictures, which we should in general not put on a much higher level than this architecture. The architect usually deals with units, which, while of course we must also allow for the fact that buildings are usually bigger than pictures, nevertheless are actually in proportion larger than the units with which the painter builds up his design. The architect cannot make his sensibility modify anything in any part of his building which is smaller than the unit which he has been forced to choose. The beauty of the building therefore depends upon the main intellectual design, which we call proportion, and not upon those smaller parts of the design upon which the painter employs his sensibility, and so fills out and makes more complex his main design. Of course there may well be exceptions to this, and if we

and had used it for their elaborate toy-making, divorcing it from any aesthetic purpose. It is interesting to see that nowadays the Germans have taken over French post-impressionist styles and again turned them to non-aesthetic ends in the kind of painting which they call expressionism.

examine small details of the Parthenon, for example, we shall see on how small units, as if he were a sculptor, the architect has employed his sensibility, so that this is an exceedingly complex work of art. But it does not make architecture only elegant, in the same way as it may make a picture, and did make most of the pictures of the eighteenth century, if the architect makes his main design rather simple, like the design of the Worcester plate, a matter of very simple curves and proportions. It is difficult to say why this should be so, but perhaps we naturally make less demands of architecture than of pictures.

In support of this view we may instance Michelangelo. It is generally admitted that Michelangelo was a greater architect than he was a painter and sculptor, and indeed he may well have been naturally and instinctively an architect. In his sculpture and paintings we may notice the same simplicity of the main design, unsupported and not made more complex by the innumerable variations which must be made by the painter's sensibility to the smaller units out of which he builds his main design, either by his sensibility to qualities within the picture or without the picture, that is, to what he sees in Nature. But there is nothing of this to disturb us in his architecture. And this is what we should expect to happen if a man who was naturally an architect took to painting and sculpture, without the peculiar sensibility which is not so necessary to an architect but is necessary for a painter and sculptor. No doubt he took to painting and sculpture because of his absolutely unsurpassed power of representing natural forms, his unparalleled virtuosity which, however, is not at all necessary, and only in some cases useful, to a painter.

The foregoing may perhaps explain why we feel that domestic architecture of the eighteenth century is often so much more satisfactory than either the furniture or the other minor domestic arts of the time, or in a great many

cases than the paintings. Of course a certain amount of this domestic architecture is too simple and deserves only to be called elegant, but a great many satisfactory buildings of the time may undoubtedly be found.

But there were, as we have mentioned, a few genuine artists of this time, artists who may be said to have regained the central tradition of European painting, which so long had been in the hands of the Italians, the sign of which tradition is, I take it, concern with complex formal qualities. Now most of the artists of the eighteenth century had seen fit to break this tradition, not in the same way as Caravaggio did, or as the many painters of the nineteenth century did, who may be said to be his spiritual progeny, the painters who so blatantly rejected everything except description and evocation of sentiment. The eighteenth-century painters chose rather to concern themselves, as we have seen, with the simplest formal qualities, though this must certainly be considered a break in the central European tradition. I do not mean that there were no painters who followed where Caravaggio had led them, for one may think of Hogarth and some other English painters, and of Vigée Le Brun and some other French painters. But even these did not reject the simpler formal qualities, and in general the painters of this time were not by any means wholly preoccupied with description and sentiment. There had, of course, been bad painters before this time, but however little they may have been able to deal with them, these did not deliberately reject major formal qualities but ineffectually grappled with them.

In not attempting to grapple with complex formal qualities, but deliberately rejecting any quality which they could not, or actually, it may be, did not want, to put into their pictures—therein, it seems to me, lay the break which eighteenth-century artists made in the central European tradition. Now an artist possessed of very great sensibility and considerable power in design born into such

a tradition, if it may deserve the name of tradition, of concern with only minor formal qualities, might be expected to find himself in difficulties. But in fact the problem of such an artist does not seem to have been unduly difficult. All that he had to do was to let his sensibility carry him away and so add complexity to the thin, elegant, and simple designs of his contemporaries. And this seems to have been precisely what such artists as Chardin and Watteau, and perhaps Canaletto, did. How like, indeed, are the works of both these artists to those of their contemporaries, but if we look a little closer, how much more solid are the objects in their pictures, how much more subtle their colour, so that often indeed Chardin's colour seems almost to be used plastically, how much more complexity in fact has been added to the design, which at first sight seems to have the only elegance which we find in so many of their contemporaries.

It is not so easy to see whether Canaletto worked in this way, for it depends whether we regard him as a Guardiesque type of painter who, like Chardin and Watteau, owing to his heightened sensibility transformed elegance into complex formal beauty, or whether we regard Guardi as slipping away from Canaletto into eighteenth-century elegance, which, as Guardi was the younger man of these two contemporaries, we may well do. And at any rate there does seem to have been some remaining later gleams of the central European tradition in Italy, where we have such excellent eighteenth-century painters as Tiepolo and Piazzetta, and perhaps one or two others, who do not seem to have raised themselves from elegance, but rather to have been undisturbed by it. But perhaps we cannot say that they were quite undisturbed by it, for in Tiepolo we see a concern with a very pleasant calligraphy which does not nevertheless interfere at all with his real sensibility to more important qualities in his pictures. This, since it seems to go with his bravura, may well have been a

heritage of the Seicento, and not due to eighteenth-century influence. Tiepolo was influenced by Piazzetta, who was influenced by Guercino, and this Seicento painter had a very nice calligraphy in his drawings. So that, on the whole, we may assume that these eighteenth-century Italian artists were still directly in the central European tradition.

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XII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By A. F. Clutton-Brock

In the nineteenth century art criticism was no longer the pursuit of a few isolated men, usually themselves artists, who wished to leave behind them some general principles and some practical advice. It became a branch of literature and learning almost as important as literary criticism. There were in this century prophetic critics, critics who wished to improve the condition of art, others who desired to make others see and comprehend the beauty which they themselves saw, and historical and discursive critics. There had of course been critics before, but never so many, and except for Vasari, who was mainly a memoir writer; Leonardo and Michelangelo, who for by far the greater part of their lives were occupied with other and less arduous pursuits; Reynolds, who was a genuine critic, and a few others, none of the stature of many nineteenth-century critics. From all this body of criticism and biography it is as easy to estimate the environment and to imagine the thoughts of nineteenth-century artists as it is difficult to know anything at all of former artists except what their works can tell us. And this is, of course, made even easier by reason of the short distance which separates these nineteenth-century artists from ourselves, and from our complete historical records of all the activities of this century. The nineteenth century is therefore a period of particular and essential importance to those who wish to know what may be the general effect of his environment on an artist, what conscious or unconscious thoughts are given to him by his times, and also to those who wish to know what in general is the effect of an artist on his contemporaries and on his environment.

It may, indeed, be relevant to inquire why any one should wish to know this, since works of art exist, and undoubtedly many enjoy them without any prolonged study of this kind. It has been said that one may best appreciate a work of art if one knows something about the artist and about his time. To this it may be answered that the best artists of to-day are, as every one knows, abused and misunderstood by a great number of persons who may be supposed to share, as much as it is ever possible to share, all the ideas and influences which come to these artists from, and are peculiar to, the times in which they live. Moreover, there are many precedents which show that this abuse is likely to die down, and the misunderstanding to be cleared away, in about a hundred years or so. And for this there is indeed a simple reason. It is true that there are many writers who cannot be truly appreciated unless one knows something of the times in which they lived, and something perhaps of their antecedents. To enjoy *Paradise Lost* as much as possible we should perhaps know something of the general position of the Christian religion in Milton's time. But this is a limitation peculiar to literature. The fine arts have a universal language of their own. 'Good painting is a music and a melody which intellect only can appreciate and that with great difficulty.' So wrote Michelangelo, and the 'language of painting' is his phrase. We should not perhaps say that it is with our intellect that we appreciate painting, but there can be little doubt that otherwise Michelangelo was right. No knowledge of externals can help us to understand the universal language of painting, this formal 'melody', but only a natural sensibility trained by its scrupulous exercise. Our sensibility to the language of painting is as independent of historical knowledge or imagination as is our intellectual understanding of Euclid.

Nevertheless, knowledge of an artist's environment is valuable to us, partly because all knowledge of the past

is valuable for its own sake, and partly because an artist's environment does affect, obliquely perhaps, the production of works of art. The artist is as much at the mercy of economic, psychological, and sociological conditions as any one else, and both for the future and the present we are naturally anxious and curious to know what conditions will prosper art. But to write a general history of taste, of the sociological conditions which affected art in the nineteenth century, is a task which no one of discretion would attempt in a single chapter, and I can but hope to show what sort of effect, oblique or direct, his environment has had on the artist in a few instances, and to give an incomplete survey of the progress of the minor and useful arts and also of architecture.

The history of all nineteenth-century art except painting and sculpture, when divorced from architecture, is that of a sad stagnation, or at best of a very slow progress towards improvement with many lapses. There never was until this time so great a mass of ugly objects, and the mere number of and weight of ugly things still about us and still being produced have caused many people to think that there was some canker of a remarkable and miraculous kind which attacked this century, some deserved punishment hardly operating according to the common observed sequence of cause and effect. In the writings of Ruskin and of William Morris, in the half-formulated beliefs of such literary painters as Burne-Jones and Rossetti, so far as their opinions can be conjectured from their pictures, we can see such a belief expressed or implied. Such a belief was, one may think, very useful at a time when it was particularly suited to the conscience of the century, to tell people that they were not only tasteless but in some rather undefined way wicked to have such sideboards, such wall-papers, such a Great Exhibition. But it is necessary to be sceptical of original Victorian sin before we can really attempt to see why so many ugly

things were made in this age, and it will be well to proceed on the hypothesis that effects followed causes even in this century, in the most ordinary and natural way, though the cause is often difficult to find.

Often, of course, the causes of any change for the better or for the worse in the production of works of art are extremely remote and shadowy, so that it is useless to attempt to find them. For example, the production of pictures depends mainly upon the number of great artists who are born at any time, and no one would seriously attempt to discover why great artists are born at one time and not at another. But even if a sufficiency of great artists is born at one time, a place for them has to be found in the economic world. Mr. Fry has pointed out that the nineteenth century was a fairly happy time for painters, because in one way and another it was possible for them to be fitted into the economic world quite conveniently. Such causes as these can be investigated, and with the minor arts, which, since they are objects of use, are naturally more subject to the laws of supply and demand and to other similar laws or influences, such causes as these assume an even greater importance. No one with an independent income is likely disinterestedly to set himself to make cheap tea-trays of great beauty, but he may very easily, and often does, paint pictures without much hope of profit.

Architecture is also more subject to outside influences than painting, but this being so highly conscious an art, if we wish to see why architecture is bad in the nineteenth century we must look for psychological reasons as well as sociological I propose first to consider the causes of the ugliness of the minor useful arts—furniture, ornaments, the inside decoration of houses and the like. The ugliness of these is probably the first stone that any one will throw at the nineteenth century.

First, of course, there was the invention and use of

machinery, the Industrial Revolution. But we need not stop there and suppose that ugliness is a punishment for 'dark satanic mills'. Machinery has had no effect on those arts which it could not imitate (except perhaps the camera, and after all this only affected the academic art of the nineteenth century, the official pictures of the English Royal Academy and the French Salon, and it is arguable that the camera actually led good artists to be shy of the appearance of evil, the slightest suspicion that their work might seem to the unintelligent observer like the contemporary productions of Burlington House). But machinery could imitate the effects of hand-carving on furniture, it could cut a moulding, reproduce an elaborate and many-coloured pattern, or weave a carpet, though it could not do these things as well as an unaided human being. But it did do these things more expeditiously and more quickly, and this quickness destroyed the habit of patience which any hand-worker at work on an elaborate object must acquire, so that his labour may not be irksome.

In general the fault of modern hand-made objects is that they are too unlaborious and careless; the workman seems to have been so pleased to have used his hands that he did not mind whether he used them to any purpose. Also, this mere use of the hand has acquired so much prestige that we do not demand great care or effort from the hand-worker. The hand-made pottery to be found now in many shops is of the simplest sort—it is sometimes called peasant art. But, in fact, machinery should be used for these simple peasant productions, and hand-workers should be employed upon patterned carpets, fine furniture, and elaborate details of architecture—all those things which now are commonly made by machinery. Machinery will, of course, inevitably fail when it is used to make an elaborate piece of work, where much depends upon the slight variations from the straight and the symmetrical

TEA-POY OF PAINTED PAPIER MÂCHÉ

(*Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington*)

which the craftsman-artist almost unconsciously puts into his work. It is remarkable that at the beginning of the Victorian age a few objects were produced which still give to some a faint pleasure, partly no doubt owing to the eccentricities of the social-historical sense, and the peculiar vision of artists which requires some slight eccentricity in the objects which they admire and cause others to admire. But also these objects, chiefly painted and inlaid papier-mâché furniture [1] and ornaments, and artificial flowers, often very good in colour, executed in strange mediums, made of wool, of shells, of wax, or of feathers, have a certain intrinsic and not wholly associative charm, and the rudiments, or perhaps the remnants, of style. These objects were necessarily made by hand, and they are excessively elaborate. They have all the faults, the absurdity, and the florid contours, of most Victorian objects; but at least they are preferable to the hand-made 'peasant' productions of to-day. At least, in these was the hand-worker set to a proper task; he was not so proud that he thought a mere dab from his brush a sufficient ornamentation.

The second cause of the ugliness of useful objects in the nineteenth century is the rise to prosperity of a secondary or middle class, rich but unleisured. Before this time the patrons of art of all kinds were for the most part aristocrats. They were not wholly satisfactory patrons, but they could be fairly easily bewildered and persuaded to take what was good for them. It is necessary that there should be such rather gullible persons, for the artist or craftsman cannot be supported by the small class of persons who understand and really like his work, since these are generally themselves artists. Artists of all kinds do indeed take in each other's washing, and it is thus that art survives; but it is economically necessary that this

[1] Some of these papier-mâché objects seem to me about as good as the average, perhaps not the best of, eighteenth-century furniture.

taking in of washing should be subsidized. A literary paper is generally read with the keenest interest by critics who wish to see how others criticize, and by those who are criticized, or know those who are criticized, in its pages. But many others will take in such a paper for many reasons, although they read it with much less keen an interest and could probably get along very well without it. And thus a literary paper is supported, and so also must artists be supported; or perhaps it would be accurate to say that only by some such process of subsidizing the taking in of washing can any furniture or ornaments, or works of art in general, other than the strictly necessary or the strictly ostentatious be produced.

Aristocratic patrons were often difficult, frivolous, querulous, and unstable, but occasionally they could be persuaded to take what was good for them, or rather what was good for craftsmen and artists, and the more so because, unlike the plutocrat, they usually have a certain negative good taste which will keep them at least from what is definitely and not obscurely or spiritually vulgar, and from the inharmonious and blatant. But the middle classes could not be persuaded to take what was good for artists and craftsmen since it was not in keeping with their temper to do so. They were unleisured and therefore practical; their money represented to them their own time, and therefore they wished for some perfectly tangible return for their money. They were not usually content with the vague prestige which comes to any one who buys some object, apparently valueless but said to be beautiful. The unleisured man wishes of course to be a man of taste, but not so much as he wishes to be rich and to be thought rich. And so furniture to please him had to look rich, so that he might look rich because he possessed it. It is scarcely necessary to say that this principle was not favourable to the production of beautiful objects.

Moreover, with the rise of a second class, rich enough to

buy whatever they wanted but socially inferior to the class above them, a particularly vicious principle began to work upon the minor arts. This second class bought objects which not only exhibited their wealth, and were in fact conspicuous waste, but also because they wished their furniture to look as if it were the sort of furniture owned by the class immediately above their own. This principle is now almost universal. Thus the mechanic admires and strives to own the jardinières, the bamboo stands, the overmantels, the framed photographs, and the mats of the small tradesman. The small tradesman admires and strives to own the comfortable leather and stained oak arm-chairs, imitation Jacobean tables, brass bowls, thick carpets, heavy curtains, of the business man. And the business man admires and strives to own the antiques, the portraits, the blue china, the chintz-covered arm-chairs, or perhaps the black and orange sofas and simple expensive furniture, or again the imitation Baroque furniture, of a socially higher class. Where this class acquires its taste is a difficult question, but it may be conjectured that it comes directly or indirectly from artists and authors. Thus Wilde and Whistler were responsible in part for the fashion for old furniture, for Eastern blue china, and Japanese prints.

This endless ascension of taste is vicious, because inevitably furniture and ornaments become in this way nothing but symbols and are scarcely ever looked at for their own sake. The eye becomes blinded by splendour which leads to self-satisfaction, and the makers of furniture take advantage of this. Imitation Baroque furniture is often to be seen in shops nowadays, and clearly no more trouble has been taken with it than will serve to make it instantly recognizable as in the Baroque manner, gilt and florid. The design is unimportant, the manner is everything, since for the moment this manner is a useful social counter.

I quote from *Middlemarch* to show how natural and normal it seemed to people of George Eliot's time that any object acquired by persons of some standing was primarily useful as a sign of their position:

> Young women of such birth, living in a quiet country house, and attending a village church hardly larger than a parlour, naturally regarded frippery as the ambition of a huckster's daughter. Then there was well-bred economy, which in those days made show in dress the first item to be deducted when any margin was required for expenses more distinctive of rank.

Among these expenses more distinctive of rank there was likely to be, I imagine, a carriage, and furniture was probably important. But I do not quote this passage to show that there has been any very great change, as there possibly has been, in the symbols distinctive of rank, from carriages and servants and furniture in the Victorian age to dress nowadays. I rather quote it to show how unblushingly it was admitted that all things bought had this end in view, the distinction of rank. We do not quite so unblushingly admit this nowadays, and this may be a hopeful sign of our improvement, and this hopefulness is, I think, justifiable. The general tendency is for those who spend a good deal of money on their household not to buy furniture and the like in order to show their social position, but rather in order to show their good taste. This may be seen from the numerous social satires by writers like Mr. Aldous Huxley and Mr. Osbert Sitwell. Naturally, but surely unwisely, since this is a very useful frame of mind in patrons of the arts, these and similar writers make ridiculous the desire to show good taste. But in truth it is not, except in extreme instances, very ridiculous. How many of us are absolutely free from the desire to show ourselves to our friends in the best light, and consequently slightly to modify our own tastes and inclinations. Nor would it

be a good thing if we were free from this desire. We can well imagine some writer possessed of that detailed sensibility which Proust could exercise, exercising it not upon snobbery but upon the subtle influences of society and our friends and the desire to appear in a good light to them upon our tastes. And though this might be a rather melancholy exposure of human weakness, in the end it might appear that it was a very pardonable, as it is certainly a most useful, weakness.

We may indeed now be returning, rather slowly, to the mode of patronage of the eighteenth century and before, and as a sign of this may be taken the growing popularity, no longer of objects which are only conspicuous, or pictures which only evoke some sentiment, but of objects and pictures which have the very slightest and most unimportant formal qualities at the expense of major formal qualities. Here, then, is a parallel to the elegance of the eighteenth century. Though in the eighteenth century, as now, it may be that furniture was used as a distinction of rank, since most of the patrons of art were at that time aristocrats, and there were no middle classes to speak of, it was not necessary, it was impossible for them to have furniture which should look as if it belonged to a higher social order. They wanted, of course, furniture which should seem to belong to their own class, but at any time anything might be taken up by that class whether it 'looked rich' or no. Horace Walpole's furniture was not considered ungentlemanly, nor were milking-stools, enamelled by some great lady with Aspinall's enamel, a symbol of the servitude of the milkmaid when they appeared in the drawing-rooms of the Victorian great. Rather they were the admiration of other great ladies, and became in due course, and paradoxically enough, a symbol of elegance to the middle classes. An aristocracy which will admit milking-stools into its drawing-rooms will admit almost anything, even a work of art, but as it happened such eccentricities as

works of art were not so common as they might have been in the Victorian age, when the aristocracy were more or less subjugated by the middle class and made to accept its conventions. And when a work of art was admitted by the aristocracy and imitations of it filtered down to the middle classes, it was at once turned into a symbol and lost all its beauty. Under the influence of Wilde, about the time when the aristocracy began to lose their hold over the middle classes and the conventions of the new kind of aristocracy began in turn to gain a hold over the middle class, Jacobean furniture, which may be said to be a work of art since it had the simplest kind of formal quality, was admitted by the upper class, but the feeble imitations of old oak tables which now fill the shops of Tottenham Court Road, though they may or may not be efficient symbols, are certainly not works of art. We might expect that the occasional diffusion of tolerable taste downwards from class to class might have some good effect, but unfortunately this never happens. If the object is a symbol it is not necessary that it should have any beauty, and it is always cheaper to make it symbolical than to make it beautiful.

If we turn to the architecture of the nineteenth century we are faced with a more complex and baffling problem. For the most part this architecture was extremely ugly, but we cannot explain this ugliness even to the same extent as we can more or less explain, or suggest a hypothesis in explanation of, the ugliness of objects of use. The smaller domestic building of the nineteenth century does indeed seem to have been affected by just such influences as affected the ugliness of objects of use. But the architecture of churches and great public buildings such as were built at the time of the Gothic Revival, which were a much more conscious and deliberate attempt at art, remain inexplicably ugly, although we cannot see that the *snobisme* of the middle classes, or even the invention

and use of machinery, was to any considerable extent the cause of this ugliness. Of course we may say that the architects of these great public buildings and churches which lie now so heavy on our land were corrupted by the ugly objects all round them. But it must be remembered that the architects of the Gothic Revival came fresh from the contemplation of great and beautiful medieval cathedrals, and this was likely at least to counteract the ugliness of the objects they saw all round them. Yet this architecture of the Gothic Revival was, as we know, in a mist of error, just such a mist as nowadays surrounds the painting of official portraits and the putting up of public statues. Something, we may be sure, was wrong, and various reformers of the Victorian age have tried to say what was wrong, though their diagnosis has never perhaps been entirely convincing.

The favourite diagnosis is that it was an error to suppose that the spirit of the nineteenth century could produce such works of art as were produced by the spirit of the fourteenth century. Morris, indeed, who was the first to protest with any vehemence against many of the effects of the Gothic Revival, accepted this view, though he made his Utopia a medieval sort of place. But this diagnosis seems to be based upon the belief that the simple piety and spiritual graces of the medieval builders were so great that, with these only to aid them, they could surmount the most complicated tasks of engineering and exercise the most impeccable taste. No one would care to under-estimate the uses of such spiritual graces, and the need for them not only in the artist but in the craftsmen. Indeed, it is probably more needed in craftsmen than in artists. It produced the devotion to a single aim, the aim of glorifying God by building a cathedral, but it does not seem likely that unaided it produced that cathedral. Recent investigators have discovered the names, if not the history, of the architects and master-builders of the Middle Ages, and it

is to these architects that a great part of the credit of the cathedrals is due. And if there were architects of such greatness then, why, it may be asked, were there not architects of such greatness in the Victorian age?

It was also said that it was a fallacy to copy; you cannot copy the style of a past age and hope to make another work of art out of an old one. To refute this we need but consider the architects of the Renaissance. So strictly did these architects seek to follow to the letter the model of the ancients that those elaborate perspective scenes in the theatre which exercised all the ingenuity of Piranesi are all based on a mistranslation and misunderstanding of Vitruvius. This belief that one must not follow the precepts and practice of another age might lead us to the absurd conclusion that it was only because Vitruvius was misunderstood that Piranesi's scenes were successful. Some such misunderstanding or mistranslation may perhaps be useful since it may lead to the necessary adaptation to changed circumstances. But a scholar might make such adaptations consciously, and not by means of a mistake, unconsciously. In truth the doctrine that we must never copy seems to be an unjust inference from the fact that in certain circumstances, never defined, it may be unwise to copy, and that an attempt at an exact copy is not very likely to be successful, although for that matter I do not see why buildings should not be copied, just as good artists often copy the works of other artists, and such copies are often extremely interesting. But Street's Law Courts are not, so far as I know, an exact copy of an old building, and it is no more and no less a copy than many buildings of the Renaissance which we think very successful.

It is also generally said that about the year 1800, though in some cases much later, there was a general loss of the sense of proportion, which means, one supposes, that even the simplest formal qualities eluded the artist or architect at this time. This is certainly true, but it will not com-

pletely serve as an explanation of the failure of the Gothic Revival, since to say that architecture was ugly because architects lost their sense of proportion at this time is well-nigh a tautology. Still, proportion, which seems to us to be the beginning and end of architecture, was utterly neglected by one great exponent of the Gothic Revival, and since it was so consciously and utterly thrown over, we may see in this something that is exceptional and remarkable. I quote from Ruskin:

> It is to be generally observed that the proportions of buildings have nothing to do with the style or general merit of their architecture. An architect trained in the worst schools and utterly devoid of all meaning and purpose in his work, may yet have such a natural gift of massing and grouping as will render his structure effective when seen at a distance.'

I should like to linger over this passage, for it seems the most extraordinary piece of art criticism that was ever written. But one may only ask why it was that some architect, trained in the worst schools (which we may take to be schools which taught Gothic revival architecture), did not at any time during our period have such a natural gift of massing and grouping as would render his structure effective when seen at a distance, which is nearly all that we ask for from any architect.

It must be admitted that there is no very plausible reason why the Gothic Revival failed, and we must therefore fall back upon the rather unsatisfactory explanation that at this time there were no good architects. This after all will serve, since the simple fact that none of the pre-Raphaelite painters were artists will serve to explain why the pictures of the pre-Raphaelite movement were not satisfactory. We should not, of course, be able to accept such an explanation for the ugliness of useful objects in the nineteenth century, since in the past there has been

no period at which there was a similar defect of craftsmen, and indeed the supply of craftsmen is ordinarily as regular and as reliable as the supply of agricultural labourers in any age.

But architecture, as we have seen, needs an architect as much as a painting needs a painter, and it is true that great architects are as rare as great painters and the supply of them as little to be relied upon. As to the builders of small and domestic architecture the inefficiency of their craftsmanship at this time is probably, as I have said, to be explained in much the same way as the inefficiency of other craftsmen of the time. The ideas of the architects of the Gothic Revival do indeed seem to us misguided, but as we shall presently see when we come to nineteenth-century painters, not more wrong and misguided than the opinions of Courbet, Seurat, and other great painters, and as little likely, on the face of it, to do those who held these opinions any harm.

We may, then, say something of the history of the Gothic Revival without seeking to find an explanation in its origin. The architecture of the Five Orders is, we are apt to think, the architecture of a reasonable age, for in itself, at first sight, it seems so eminently reasonable. In what other church but one built by some follower of Palladio could there be sung a musical metaphorical Argument from Design by Addison? But though it may at first sight seem that they are so, the Five Orders are not truly reasonable, and the eighteenth century, when it took upon itself to exalt reason, exalted a sinister conspirator, outwardly most respectable and safe, which would eventually destroy the rights of property, Addison's rhymed arguments from design, and that sober architecture. When it is believed, as reason at first made the eighteenth century believe, that a work of art has in itself some inherent objective order or arrangement which is called beauty, then rules of art are invented. But reason points out that after all

we cannot call a work of art in itself beautiful, since we have no grounds on which to make that inference, and all that we can say without fear of quite reasonable contradiction is that when we look at a work of art which we call beautiful something happens in our minds; we have some kind of emotion. Descartes showed this when he showed that consciousness, the certainty of the thinking self, was the most immediate fact of existence, and so he prepared the way for the romantic revival. As his philosophy became popular, and in so becoming was to a certain extent changed, there came into being a large class of words which describe not so much, as Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith says, the external properties of things as the effects which they have on us, or the different emotions which they give to us. And not only were new words invented but old words changed their meanings. The word *interesting* which once meant simply *important* acquired its modern meaning, and with the popularizing of *sentimental*, describing the act of taking a conscious pleasure in the emotions, words like *amusing* and *pathetic* acquired their modern meaning.

The word *romantic* itself still seems outwardly to describe the objective qualities of things, but we can see how Descartes' philosophy gradually changed its meaning from a term of abuse to a term of praise. It remained for a long time a term of abuse as applied to literature, but applied to buildings or places it came to mean *picturesque*, or interesting because of associations. Thus people began to like a building because it produced in them a certain emotion. Art now came into the sphere of the emotions, and an emotion of one kind or another now became the criterion of certain kinds of art. No longer was the sole reason for liking a building the fact that it conformed to certain rules. It was possible to like it because, as Ruskin says of an historic French building, its stones were 'the very stones which the eyes of St. Louis saw lifted into their

places'. And so Gothic ruins came to be liked or even built,[1] and Gothic architecture was liked because it produced in those who beheld it a certain emotion, though as yet not the emotion which a work of art proper should produce. All attempts to imitate Gothic architecture in the eighteenth century were rather silly and half-hearted, and bore no resemblance to real Gothic because these imitations were only meant to stimulate a disorderly romantic emotion. Gothic architecture is as yet, with people like Horace Walpole, a mere accidental heap of picturesqueness consecrated by ruin and the lapse of time, and so it remained even in Scott's novels. But it is nevertheless to be observed that this Strawberry Hill Gothic was often fairly charming when it was merely a superficial pleasing ornamentation over the Renaissance style of building, as were the Chinese details also introduced about this time. At any rate people began to be aware of Gothic architecture, and especially the writers who made and preceded the Romantic Revival. It was considered about as near to great architecture as Ossian is to Homer, and it was probably liked for much the same reasons as Ossian is liked.

But artists are seldom Cartesians, and soon Gothic architecture was encumbered with as many rules as the most strict and pedantically classical examples of the Renaissance style. This is the natural, the inevitable, fate of a movement or fashion for one kind of art. I think that the Renaissance Revival of classical building probably began in much the same way, for in many rather early

[1] In this as in many other ways the Renaissance and the Gothic Revival make a parallel, a parallel which it would be amusing to work out in detail. For Girolamo Genga (1476–1551), the Umbro-Sienese pupil of Signorelli, built a house with the form and appearance of a ruin. If indeed this parallel is sufficiently exact in many ways this is another reason for believing that the Gothic revival only failed because no good architecture flourished while it continued.

pictures we can see classical detail treated in just the same way as Gothic and Chinese detail was treated by eighteenth-century architects and designers. Mantegna himself uses his classical details as if they were amusing, charming, and useful in design, in much the same way as Matisse uses Moorish decoration and simple patterned wallpapers in his pictures.[1] Neither this preliminary lack of seriousness nor the subsequent ponderous, almost pedantic, imitation is necessarily likely to cause a movement of this kind to fail. We may complain that the first Sir Gilbert Scott was far too pedantic, and indeed, when we find that he restored an old church by making it all into one style, knocking down, for example, all that part of it which was in the Perpendicular and Decorated style, and restoring the whole building in the Early English style, then we may complain, and with justice. But such pedantry will not make a good architect build bad buildings. Nor, on the other hand, would Wilkins's passion for symmetry, even if it caused him to make the interiors of his buildings intolerably inconvenient, have necessarily made his buildings ugly to look at (however tiresome they might be to live in), though this passion for symmetry was in reality a most unscholarly, most unpedantic idea. We can ridicule the ideas and the mistakes of the architects of the Gothic Revival, just as in truth we may ridicule the ideas and the intellectual errors of almost any artist that any one has ever heard of, from Raphael to Cézanne, but this ridicule would be completely irrelevant.

Indeed, though it is easy to see where the ideas of the Gothic revivalist architects were wrong, it is not hard to argue that they had a certain pragmatic truth, that they were useful for their time. Whether it was a good thing that the Gothic overwhelmed the Greek Revival, which

[1] There is also the example of other Squarcionesqui who adorned the seats on which their virgins sat with the, to them, magical letters 'S.P.Q.R.'

began and was more or less abortive so far as architecture was concerned, at the end of the eighteenth century, is a doubtful question. But the enthusiasm for the Middle Ages was a very distinct and useful opponent to the materialism of the nineteenth-century business man, and this enthusiasm for the Middle Ages which made both Welby Pugin and Burges try to live like men of the Middle Ages in all the small details of their lives, was shaped in the hands of William Morris into a real and useful enthusiasm for beautiful things.

William Morris was a great man. We are apt to think of him as if he were like his friends, queasily distempered with an abhorrence of everyday life, positively and protestantly concerned with the things of the spirit. And certainly on these friends of William Morris everyday life had its revenge, for they seem now unnaturally absurd. But Morris kept his head. It was perfectly consistent with his religion, it seems almost natural and proper, that he should have thrown expensive books at the heads of his workmen, that he should have made that famous remark, 'It's better than having an old woman for a brother', when Rossetti complained that a character in one of Morris's sagas had a dragon for a father.

But if the pre-Raphaelite religion will not bear the close companionship of life, it should be remembered that this was a religion of faith and not of works, except perhaps in the hands of William Morris, and that such a religion was necessary to overcome the almost insuperable obstacle of middle-class ideas about art. And it is important not to judge the pre-Raphaelite religion by its works. Morris himself painted the best pre-Raphaelite picture, but he would paint no more, because, as he said, he could not endure a frame. Pre-Raphaelitism itself could not endure a frame. The worst side of it could be expressed within a frame, but unless we have a very keen social-historical and perhaps sentimental sense, so keen that we can enjoy

Cromwell's nightcap as Horace Walpole enjoyed it, I think that the demerits of pre-Raphaelite pictures as pictures will blind us even to their expression of the tenuous angelic queasy side of the creed. Queasy it was in one sense; it could not stomach the roast beef of prosperous Victorian art, but unhappily we can scarcely now stomach the products of this queasiness. The spiritual meal, once so tenuous and delicate, seems now too sweet. But in Morris's hands this creed began to find expression in works, in furniture, in domestic chintzes, in wall-papers, in the architecture of his followers, in that domestic revival which was one of the most hopeful events in the history of English art in the nineteenth century.

William Morris's way of reforming art has persisted in England, and he has had innumerable followers. But there was one other school of reformers who rejected the pre-Raphaelite creed even when it was sobered and made more practical by Morris. These reformers, at the head of whom we may put Whistler, Pater, and then Oscar Wilde, were also queasy. They could not read Trollope because in his autobiography he confessed to business-like habits of writing. But they differed from Morris and the pre-Raphaelites. Not for them were the attractions of the medieval mind, the companionship of art and religion, but rather they set art by itself, a thing to be adored for its own sake. A good enough creed, we may think, even if in its beginning it seems a little ridiculous. But it was not at first very good for the producers and the admirers of useful objects. It was good for artists but for scarcely any one else. There is no need for an artist (by which I mean here a painter or a sculptor) to make his art the handmaid of religion, because even if he does not find for his art this excellent situation she will not go upon the streets. But the more useful arts should perhaps be found such a respectable situation, otherwise it is quite true that they will go upon the streets, that they will become meretricious,

the symbols of a splendid, idle, and dissolute life. The eighteenth century in France will be the model for useful things, there will be many scent-bottles, gilt wastepaper baskets with flowers upon them, and the respectable lady in the suburbs will so adorn her house that you may mistake her for a king's mistress.

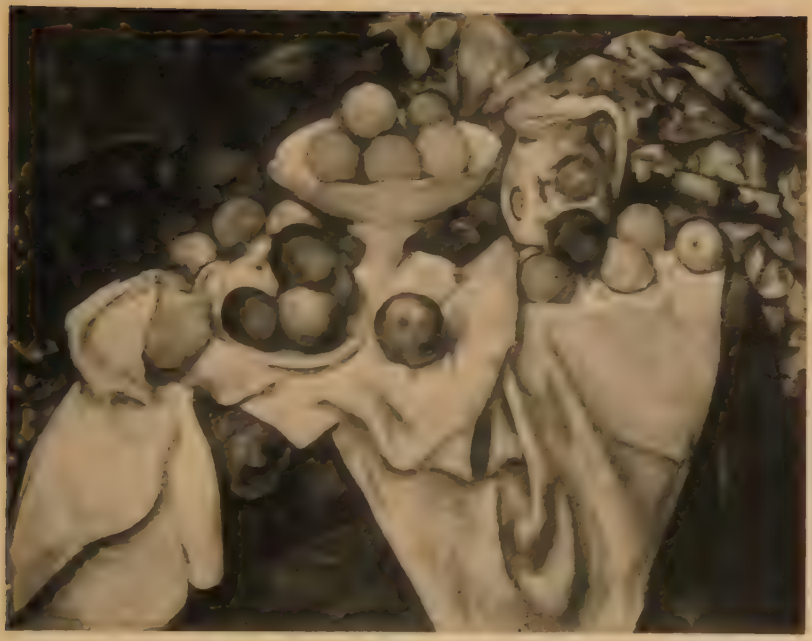
So far we have had rather a melancholy story to tell, but when we come to nineteenth-century painting we find that the nineteenth century is a most admirable period and will bear comparison with the greatest ages of art. For if the central European tradition of painting is, as I have suggested, marked by a concern with complex formal qualities, then in France during the nineteenth century this central tradition may be said to have been revived and continued. It is remarkable that at the same time there was also a complete break in the central tradition, such a break as had never been before. For both in France and England there grew up a kind of popular painting which had absolutely no connexion of any kind with art, and was simply a machine, so to speak, for describing natural appearances and evoking sentiments of one kind or another. And even when such painters as the pre-Raphaelites definitely revolted from this way of painting, they only revolted towards the evocation of another kind of sentiment and the description of different things in nature. There is no need to say very much about this kind of painting, to which the name of art was most curiously given in the nineteenth century, except to remark that such painting is continued to-day, both in England and in France. But at the same time the central tradition of painting was upheld by a great number of very good and often very great artists, chiefly in France, but Constable and Turner in England also assisted in the tradition. For Constable was perhaps the first who really taught the full orchestration of modern landscape-painting, and thus it was possible for nineteenth-century painters

to put all the complexity which previously had chiefly been obtained only in figure pieces into landscapes, which seem somehow more suited to the temper of modern painters. In general we may say that the problem before most painters of the last century and this is to get as much, or nearly as much, complexity into a small picture as had previously been obtained in large figure pieces. For there is not much room for large pictures in our modern way of living, and especially there is no room for large mural paintings. I do not mean that all painters do not wish for great spaces of wall to cover, which, alas, in the nineteenth century were chiefly given to such painters as Watts, Puvis de Chavannes, Flandrin, and many others less notorious, though Ingres and Delacroix at least were given some space. But since it was chiefly only the indifferent painters who were given wall-space in the nineteenth century, the good painters had mostly to content themselves with small canvases and to express all their sensibility in a confined space.

It may be as well to give a list of the great or the best painters of the nineteenth century—Ingres, David, Delacroix, Corot, Courbet, Daumier, Manet, the impressionists, Sisley, Signac, Monet, Pissarro, and the artists who were not really impressionist (for impressionism is not the method for very great artists), Degas, Renoir, and Seurat. Then we come to Cézanne, who was to a certain extent influenced by the impressionists but never was in the least an impressionist. He is perhaps the greatest artist of modern times. After him came the post-impressionists, Van Gogh and Gaugain, two Romantic artists who really worked on their own lines, and then the great number of very good modern artists, among whom Matisse, Picasso, Bonnard, Derain are perhaps the four greatest.

It would be pleasant to write at length about these artists, but we have left no room to do so, having been diverted towards the social history of art in the nineteenth

century. It is only to be noticed that nearly all of these artists in no way took any real part in the life of their times, that they were often isolated from everything that was going on around them to a degree that would have seemed fantastic to any artist of the Renaissance. Cézanne, for example, lived almost all his life in the country, a complete recluse, and the only effect that his art had on his times was, so far as we know, that when his pictures appeared in M. Vollard's shop parents took their children to see these pictures in order that they might see what would happen if they did not learn to draw. Also, of course, the young Cézanne, before he began to paint in his familiar manner and when he was occupied with very turbulent Baroque pieces, inspired Zola to write *L'œuvre*. It is inconceivable that Cézanne could have painted at all had he not had some private income. But, indeed, if we consider wholly what painters said and thought their greatness is not very apparent, until perhaps we come to Cézanne. For nearly all the painters of the nineteenth century held the most conflicting views about the nature of painting, one good painter being often violently opposed to any other, almost as violently as Ingres was opposed to the romantics who followed him. Moreover, we must not forget the continual war which was fought throughout the nineteenth century, and is still fought with unabated ferocity, between the untraditional artists, mentioned above, and the traditional and good artists. We may well imagine some sceptical Philistine who understood and derided the disputes of artists, as Julian the Apostate understood the theological disputes among the Christians of his time, inviting in imagination all the artists of the nineteenth century to a synod, as Julian invited all the Christians, that he might enjoy the spectacle of their furious encounters. But a more tolerant observer of the differences of artists might notice that, however much they differed in their theories,



STILL LIFE, BY CÉZANNE

(By permission of Durand-Ruel & Sons, France, Paris)

the applause of posterity attests the similarity of their practices. And present theories of art will support such tolerance. It is remarkable that the post-impressionists, though they objected with some reason to those who continued impressionists only because the public had at last managed to like impressionism and to give it its official support,[1] did not struggle with the impressionists as the romantics struggled with the classicists at the beginning of the century, though the theories of the impressionists and of the post-impressionists were probably farther apart than the theories of the classicists and of the romantics. The theory of post-impressionism has, as Mr. Clive Bell has pointed out, been expressed by M. Maurice Denis, who at the end of the nineteenth century founded, with some of his friends, the school of Symbolism in painting. This is M. Denis's profession of faith:

Se rappeler qu'un tableau—avant d'être un cheval de bataille, une femme nue, ou une quelconque anecdote—est essentiellement une surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblées.

And this profession of faith sets both critics and artists free to enjoy the pictures and to ignore the disputes and the theoretical errors of nineteenth-century artists and indeed of all artists. If we know that a picture is a plane surface covered with colours arranged in a certain order, it will be nothing to us that one painter approved of camels and Arabs, and another of Grecian subjects; that another wished to represent the natural effect of light, another the solidity of objects.

With this habit of tolerance which post-impressionist theories have given to us it is easy to understand that one painter prefers to arrange his colours on a plane surface

[1] It is a curious fact that at the last exhibition of the Royal Academy a large percentage of the pictures were in the impressionist manner.

in one way, and another painter to arrange them in another way. So long as these arrangements happen to be beautiful we will not demand anything else. It has sometimes been asserted that when in the nineteenth century art criticism began to exist as a serious branch of learning, simultaneously art decayed. This is, as we have seen, absolutely untrue if we consider painters. But we may suppose that with the growth of conscious and careful art criticism painters found a great deal more to quarrel about than they had in the past, and perhaps this is likely to be the chief effect of art criticism on artists. But the theory of post-impressionism has at least given no excuse for such quarrels, and has in fact almost entirely removed them. Whether these theories are true it is impossible here to inquire, but that they are convenient cannot be denied. It is more relevant to ask whether they are likely to last. They do not seem to have any rival theories at the moment except one. There are signs that a mystical belief in order is arising, and some people believe that artists paint to make order of chaos. Philosophically this belief may or may not be true, but the illogical results of it are pictures painted in a mechanical way. I believe that certain Russians in Paris paint pictures which they assure their patrons cannot be appreciated without a knowledge of mechanics, but this may remotely be connected with communism. The suggestions of the word order are manifold, and we may expect this belief to lead an extreme severity and an appearance of extreme formality in pictures. This will not of course matter very much, since, as we have seen, the most fantastic and illogical beliefs of nineteenth-century painters did not prevent them from being very great artists. Seurat's belief in man's equality—so that he tried to invent a method in painting which should allow every one to paint as well as every one else—did not prevent him from being one of the greatest of all nineteenth-century artists, and consequently one of

the greatest of all artists. Nevertheless, since the post-impressionist theories make for peace it is to be hoped that they survive for a long time.

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XIII

ART IN A MODERN DEMOCRACY

By F. S. Marvin

It remains to review shortly the prospects of art in a world industrialized, mechanized, organized like the present, and consider the influences, hostile and hopeful, that play upon it. In particular the place and the possibilities of education—the general education of a democracy—in relation to art, call for some consideration at the end of this volume. But before entering on the topic of education, which is the remedial side of the problem, it will be well to try and gain a fair and comprehensive view of the situation as a whole. On one side it is true there is a mass of dark and threatening clouds; is there no light on the other? What in fact are the most salient features of the social age in which we live, which may have influence on the prospects of Art?

In the first place it is an age of extraordinary activity. Men's minds have never before worked so intensely and continuously together in solving the problems that have arisen from the unification of the world and the welfare of the people upon it. It is an age of unexampled scientific development. The phenomena of matter and of life are being explored with a penetration and a fruitfulness far beyond that of any earlier epoch. In the realm of general politics both nationalism and internationalism stand out as equally prominent and growing factors. From one angle the ambitions and rivalry of nations, the growing-pains of young states fresh from the forge of war and conference, seem to threaten the peaceful progress of the world. But, in another and wider aspect, the common interests of mankind have at the same moment been brought together and are under review in the League of Nations as they

never have been before. Within the state, in all civilized countries, intensive measures are being taken, largely under state supervision and with public support, to educate, elevate, and make happier every individual. This is the accepted programme of all modern democracies, and its performance occupies by far the larger part of the time and energy of the legislative and administrative bodies. Such an outburst of many-sided activity entitles us to think of the age as a New Renaissance, but it is a renaissance of another type from the last. In the last Renaissance art, the revival of an old culture, the exploration of an unknown world, were the leading features, but this is not so now. The present is a renaissance of a more universal and popular kind, in which individuals and nations are striving for a fuller life, for more freedom and enjoyment, but in which co-operation, safety, order, and material progress are the paramount public ends. Where does Art stand in this confused and busy scene? Must not Art—the power and the desire to create and enjoy beauty—form a necessary element in any renaissance of the human spirit?

Before attempting a general answer or any balance of the evils and the promise of our present state, there is one preliminary remark to be made, one distinction to be drawn, which if omitted might vitiate the whole argument. The question here is not the possibility of the production of great works of art under modern conditions, or of the existence of small groups of people capable of enjoying the best in art and adding to it. These are also matters of great importance and connected with the general theme. But in any case they are only a part of it, and in the democratic view certainly the smaller part. The larger question is, how far the whole people in a modern democratic state are affected towards art. Is their appreciation blunted or quickened by modern conditions? What hope is there of a general revival, a widespread production? If the soil as a whole is fertile, great plants as well as small

are likely to grow in it. The prospect of the mass of a modern population, blunted by mechanical toil and sunk in apathy and low enjoyments, while a handful of favoured people pursue a higher aesthetic life, is not an attractive one, nor is it threatened by contemporary conditions. We are now too much knit up together for that. Pleasures and tastes are too well distributed throughout society to admit of such sharp barriers or of enclaves and havens of peace for the cultured few. We shall go forward or go down in a body. If the masses are degraded by mechanical conditions, the tastes and powers of the few will grow to match them. Frivolity, selfishness, and cynicism in the few would be the echo of apathy and undeveloped tastes and sympathies in the mass.

The actual state of things is, however, very different. The dominant influences in a modern democratic society press much alike on all its members. All are affected by the increasing stress and rush of life. All pay at the moment greater attention and respect to science than to art. All are waiting for some abatement of international and industrial strife before their minds can attend in peace to the promptings of the creative impulse which makes for beauty. On all, too, there rests in varying degrees that amalgam of low aims, coupled with wide publicity, which we know as 'vulgarity'. To state this, which is common knowledge, is not pessimism: our task is to appreciate the actual fairly, and look through it to the healing processes which are at work also, often through the same agencies which seem to depress and obstruct the upward movement.

What seem to be the most serious obstacles to a wider interest in art, to fuller enjoyment and creation of beauty at the present time? Many writers have discussed the question, and many various explanations are given; but it may be possible to find some common ground. Some put first the 'craze for enjoyment', the passion for moving about and 'sight-seeing' of a superficial kind. Others,

looking perhaps deeper, lay the responsibility on the 'dominance of the machine', the 'devitalization of industry'. Akin to this comes the stress of modern competition, due to large-scale production, with the rush and worry of life produced by this, and aggravated by the congestion of workers in large industrial centres, often with miles of hasty and disturbing travel before they reach their work. Looking to another side of the problem, others attribute to the printing press, coupled with a low minimum of education, the vogue for inferior literature and the superficial treatment of great and beautiful things, which require quiet and depth of thought for their appreciation.

It will be seen that mechanism, and the movement and organization of masses of people in one system, are common elements in the criticism offered. But before dealing with this, or suggesting a cure, it may not be amiss to point out that the critics are discussing not so much a new disease but a new patient. The whole state of society, with its common and dominant ideals, is a new fact in the world. Never before the last hundred years have great societies set before them the task of initiating all their members into the complete human heritage of art and knowledge, and it is not surprising that new and formidable obstacles have been discovered in the way of attaining it. No doubt the most serious is the opposition which must exist between the vast and dominating organizations which control industry, education, and government, and the free activities of mind which give us art. As we see the antithesis in the contemporary world, it seems almost absolute; on the one side the individual seeking an outlet for creation and enjoyment, on the other a weight of chains, cramping the expansion and depressing the spirit. But if we trace the opposition back to its source, it will be seen that we have ourselves allowed it to spread in its present form. There is no necessary antagonism between the two

aspects of human activity, the artistic and mechanical, or the artistic and scientific. In earlier times, and in the normal state, they grew together and assisted one another in their growth. The Greeks in this as in so much besides are our chief exemplars. Supreme in both spheres, they never dreamt of conflict between the impulse to create new beautiful things and the desire to understand things as they are, between making a thing beautiful and making it work. The two in fact are complementary if man is to fulfil the end of his being. The Parthenon combines both to perfection, mathematics in the laws of its proportion and stresses, art in architecture and sculpture. How far the governing thoughts of the whole resided in one brain we cannot tell; but that the harmony was of the closest kind is obvious from the consummate unity of the result. Single brains in the past have been capable of these varied activities, not only among the Greeks but at least down to the Renaissance, where Leonardo towers highest among many of similar endowments.

The modern world has altered the extent but not the essence of the problem: it has now become a question of the co-operation of groups, the groups necessitated by the incomparable growth of knowledge and the specialization of functions. There may still arise from time to time liaison-minds, capable of interpreting one function to the other, and at all times it is necessary to have those who will maintain the equal validity of all. But for the greater part of the last century, thanks to the amazing triumphs of applied science, the balance of interest weighed so heavily on that side that it hardly seems to have occurred to men to ask whether they were making the world more beautiful or more hideous by the work they were engaged in. We see now that the worse alternative was true: they left us a world made uglier, though richer, by their efforts. But our eyes are now open and, though disfigurement enough still goes on, there is active opposition to it in all

its forms. Moreover, a new school of thought has arisen which finds in the artistic impulse not only a prior but a superior directing force. Professor Whitehead sees in it the natural link between science and religion. Dr. Jacks would put it at the base of citizenship. The increased interest in the artistic and creative element in education is connected with this change of mind.

If we now turn to education in a concrete case, it will be seen how subtle and complex the problem is, and how every such case contains elements of hope and vigour as well as the preoccupations which are obstructive to art. Take an average bright boy of the present day from any class of society or any type of school. He is certain to be more interested in wireless and motor-cars than in painting or poetry or the architecture of his parish church. He will study them intensely and move heaven and earth to possess and operate some himself. They are for the moment his chosen or natural form of self-expression, his contact-point with the material world. It is not a slavery or subjection to the material through which it works; it is rather the agency by which his mind at that stage gains freedom and expansion, and though there is little in it of the element of beauty, it has distinct affinities with the artistic impulse. He may by these means not only exercise his creative and adapting talents, but cover the country, see fresh people and places, and enjoy as by a miracle the words and thoughts of famous people hundreds of miles away. In acting thus he is typical of the age, restless, wide-ranging, enjoying pleasure and novelty, but moving rather in space than in time, dwelling rather on the surface than in the depths of things.

The moral is obvious. The educator will not attempt directly to antagonize the natural and strongest impulses of the young, but to use them to their best purposes and add to them on their defective side. And these deficiencies are mainly two, a consideration of how the mechanical

development affects the beauty of the surrounding world, and—the much longer study—how in the past the creation of beauty by other men has given us a world which we are bound to leave either more beautiful or uglier than we find it.

As soon as we begin to think of solving a great social problem by education, a hundred grave doubts and difficulties crowd on the mind—the best means of approach, the danger of the reaction from the too much, the fear of complete futility and forgetfulness after all. It is best at starting to take a modest view, and regard the possibilities as strictly limited, and formal education as one function only, and not the most powerful, by which each generation prepares the next. Education may do much, but it cannot transform society, for teachers only reflect and enforce ideas that have become prominent in the world around them. The world, however, which surrounds the present-day educator interested in art, is not unpromising. Within the vast area covered and controlled by scientific machinery and mechanical reproduction there is a freshly budding field of artistic creation and of interest in art. The interest is manifest in every branch and unexampled for centuries. As it spreads, in ways which we will illustrate in a moment, men begin to ask whether a plan is not conceivable by which the two areas of machine production and artistic creation might not be brought into a harmonic whole. This is an environment in which educational influences may work with promise. Three favouring points are there, all of them of capital importance. First, the problem is not in itself insoluble, because we know that there is no essential contradiction between the mechanical and the creative, the scientific and the artistic, and that we have ourselves allowed the opposition to arise by letting the mechanical slip away from the aesthetic idea. Second, there is this new Renaissance, in which, although art is not the leading feature, yet abundant work of an artistic kind

is being produced. Lastly, there is a public determination, in all civilized countries, to raise and incorporate all their citizens by education, an education which must include, if it is to be complete, the appreciation of beautiful things and the encouragement of the power to produce them. Given these capital points, who could despair? Is not the question rather whether we are actually using our educational provision to the best advantage?

In the fundamental matter of architecture—the material surroundings in which life generally and school education in particular goes on—a great awakening is manifest. The planning and amenities of schools are now for the first time receiving serious thought among us, and the advance on these lines must take rank with town-planning and garden cities as the most hopeful signs of a new life, better for health as well as art. In architecture Sweden, Denmark, and the United States are leading the field. In garden cities and school-architecture England is probably in the first line. If this is so, it is the best omen for our own progress, for it is the expression in material form of the belief that a good and happy life, satisfying both body, eye, and soul, must be lived in pleasant surroundings, and that nature as well as buildings must contribute a share.

The garden city, and the planning of new towns and the improvement of old ones, is a fascinating topic and well deserves a separate chapter in such a book as this. We can, however, only glance at it here and return to the larger question of education. For garden cities would quickly turn to slums again if the people living in them had not the desire to keep them beautiful and the knowledge of how to do it. Here teaching as well as regulation must play a part. What the school may do, and how the school has lost its chance in the past, may be best illustrated by a contrast. Put on the one side the old type of school—elementary or public schools were alike in that—

where either no attention at all was paid to art or flat copies of a floral or geometric kind were handed round for careful reproduction. The practice is by no means extinct to-day, and may be seen widely diffused in distant parts of the British Empire, for instance in the schools of India. It would perhaps be hard to say which method was more harmful, complete neglect or mechanical trifling such as this. All such cases are alike in want of interest, want of knowledge, want of will. Put on the other side the increasing number of schools to-day where a room is set apart for art-work under a teacher of real interest and good taste. Among many such the mind of one accustomed to visit schools goes back to a public school, a day's march from London, where in an admirable room under a stimulating teacher, himself no mean artist with the brush, the boys are encouraged to practise many varied forms of artistic work, and are all doing it with the utmost zest. There were many studies with the brush, drawings of one another in crayon, modelling, leather work, and—the latest experiment—the making of beautiful tiles and the staining of glass. Clearly, if this can be done in one school, working under the same conditions of crowded time-table, insistent athletics, and external examinations, it can be done in others. It is the effective desire which is needed, teachers with a will.

Such a desire, such teachers, arise from the general enlightenment of society, gradually diffused. There is no reason to be dissatisfied with the rate of diffusion now going on. Previous chapters have discussed painting at length; a few words here may be appropriate on two other branches of art which find a natural footing in school-work: one is decorative art, the making of small objects for personal and domestic use, the other is literature and especially poetry. In the former sphere the increasing number of exhibitions of artistic handicrafts is striking and most encouraging. Schools do it all over the country, and

Women's Institutes and groups of villages. The most notable is the Annual Exhibition of Applied Arts and Handicrafts held this year (1927) at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster. One sees here quantities of hand-made fabrics and charming jewellery, some may think even better than the objects, five thousand years old, lately unearthed at Ur. There is exquisite taste and a fresh abundance of imaginative design. All is hand-made or, rather, made by individuals with simple domestic tools, and, though the scope of their market is small, the indirect influence on machine-made goods is wide and obvious. No doubt a marked improvement is going on in the taste of articles of common use, in advertisements, designs, colours, dress. The practical question for the future is the delimitation of the sphere of the machine-made thing and others, made better by individual workmanship. Schools and Technical Colleges, which touch both spheres, can do valuable work in defining the boundaries.

Poetry, and literature generally, is a sphere of art somewhat similar to that of the handicrafts, but traditionally, and for one compelling reason, much more closely bound up with the work of the schools. Literature, in the simple sense of reading and writing, has always been the primary object of school education. The young have to be put in a position to interpret the thoughts of those with whom they are to live, and of those in the past whose thoughts have been preserved in books. They must also be able to pass their own thoughts on in an intelligible form. This is the fundamental requirement, but around it have gathered all the pleasures and inspiration of reading, the relation of the past in history, the fathoming of mysteries in philosophy, the expression of the emotions and the idealization of the world in poetry. Hence, though we may rightly press for a larger place for the plastic arts and handicraft in education, the use and understanding of books must remain the chief concern, and it is through them that the

young will gain their taste for the best in literature and exercise themselves in the arts of verbal expression. The present position, when a democratic state is enforcing a minimum of literature on all its citizens, bears some analogy to what we noticed in the case of the domestic and minor arts of form.

In both cases there is abundance of skill and fresh invention when we give it vent; in both there is a vast surrounding mass of inferior machine-made stuff which threatens to submerge the individual artist unless we take vigorous measures to confine the torrent in its course. In painting and drawing, teachers like M. Cizek in Vienna have been able to elicit amazing results from children by methods of suggestion and freedom. Even if the talent, as we are told, falls off after the age of sixteen, good must have been done by arousing the artistic aptitude of the child at his most impressionable age. And in poetry a similar experience has rewarded those who have encouraged their pupils to express themselves in verse. Fresh and immature work is rather the note of the age, an age in art of promise and aspiration but not of solidity or long-continued effort. Anthologies, for instance, of Georgian poetry contain a greater volume and variety of attractive matter than could be paralleled in any equal period of time since the Restoration or even the Elizabethans. But the work, though often charming and always sincere, bears all the marks of a very fleeting experience; there is little in it which sticks in the memory or to which we should wish to return again and again for study or the discovery of fresh meaning and beauty.

Strange, that in an age in which science, with its accompanying power of organization, has given us so enduring a type of social structure, strong enough, in all countries thus organized, to resist even the shocks of the Great War, the arts and literature seem in the mass to have taken on their most ephemeral guise. The explanation must lie

in some law of compensation in human effort. Solid and continuous work, based on the past and attaining its ends through co-operation with others, is being done in the spheres of science and social and political organization, and side by side with this the world of art as a whole has become more individual, less traditional, and, except perhaps for certain painters, more ephemeral. The solid minds have been diverted from it, and the artist is reacting against what appears to him a hard, repressive, and impersonal thing. Hence we have a dislocation in the forward movement, and art goes on in isolation, often in repulsion, from the strongest collective force in the modern world.

The schools—for we are still thinking mainly of the place of a democratic education in art—can do much to temper this excessive individualism and anti-traditionalism in art. They need not, and should not, run counter to the outpourings of fresh invention which are so abundant, but they may, and should, keep steadily pressing the great truth, put admirably the other day by an able writer: 'No art which has ceased to be a humanity, has ever lived at all: least of all has any poetry lived which was not both an art and a humanity.'[1] In other words—for this may seem so terse and vague as to have little meaning—every art which is to live and affect men's minds beyond the passing moment must recognize its social root and its social sanction, must link itself with the history of mankind. Poetry must observe and utilize the associations of words and what they tell us of the life and thought of poets and people in the past. Architecture, the fundamental material art, must find a place in the teaching of history, as the most perfect expression of the civilization of an age or a country, combining the need of shelter, aesthetic aspiration, and technical skill. Painting and drawing will be introduced to the child in their natural connexion as

[1] *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 January 1928.

originators of writing. Linked first with the practical purpose of expressing ideas and impressions of the outer world and handing them on to others, the element of beauty, the joy of expression, blossoms later on its own branch and is cultivated for its own value. Such methods of presentation are often practised in schools and should become general. They will not make artists, but they must increase the popular interest in art, and are essential if art is to take its due place in the national consciousness. Both art and science, indeed, need an adjustment towards the centre of education, and, though the circle of human life cannot admit of two independent centres, there may be twin foci, and our existence is not a perfect sphere.

It is well worth while for any one to turn again, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, to the words of the most stimulating writer on art in the ancient world. He has been known for centuries as 'Longinus', and he wrote a short treatise on 'The Sublime', meaning the noble or elevating in art, and especially the art of poetry. The latest scholars tell us that he probably lived at Rome, some thirty years after the birth of Christ. He makes a most apt and striking quotation from the first chapter of Genesis, and seems to be the first of international Greek critics, having something in him both of Greek, Roman, and Jew. In any case he was a man of extraordinary good sense and inspiration, and says things which could hardly be bettered on several of the most important points discussed in this chapter.[1] Can art be taught at all, it has been asked. Longinus answers: 'The first consideration is genuine emotion in the right place . . . it is a gift rather than an acquired quality.' Why then study our predecessors, or show respectful imitation of the great? Because 'we should still do our utmost to train our minds into sympathy with what is noble and impregnate them again

[1] See recent translation by Mr. W. H. Fyfe in the Loeb Classical Library.

and again with lofty inspiration. . . . For it is impossible that those whose thoughts and habits all their lives long are petty and servile should flash out anything wonderful, worthy of immortal life. Like pillars of fire, these great characters will lead our thoughts to the ideal standards of perfection. . . . How would Homer have listened to this passage of mine? Great is the ordeal, if we propose such a jury and audience as this to listen to our utterances . . . but even more stimulating would it be to add, "If I write this, how would all posterity receive it?"'

But what of the mass, the modern democracy which is our special subject in this chapter? Is there anything in 'The Sublime' which applies to them? 'To speak generally', says Longinus, 'you should consider that to be truly beautiful and sublime which pleases all people at all times. For when men who differ in their habits, their tastes, their ages, their dates, all agree together in holding one and the same view about the same writings, then the unanimous verdict makes our faith in the admired passage strong and indisputable.'

Could democratic taste find a stronger warrant, not democracy at one moment or in one country, but 'semper ubique et ab omnibus', the verdict of mankind? Nor could one find elsewhere a stronger or truer note of hope on which to close.

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20 pl.

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THE 'UNITY HISTORY SCHOOLS' AND THE 'UNITY SERIES'

THE idea of these schools, which have now been held nearly every year since 1915, was first mooted at a gathering of the London Adult School Union at Jordans on the 1st of August, 1914. It was the day on which war was declared between Germany and Russia and the world was on the eve of the greatest cataclysm in history. Then was the time to turn one's thoughts to those greater and more permanent forces which have built up the world-community of the present, imperfect as it is, but growing, as we hope, stronger in unity in spite of the most terrible shock which could have been imagined. Mr. Marvin undertook to consider a plan for historical studies on the lines of Unity and Progress, and the first 'Unity History School' was held in August 1915 at Woodbrooke, the social and educational settlement of the Society of Friends, near Birmingham.

The subject was 'The Unity of Western Civilization', and it gave name and colour to all which have succeeded it. The common foundations and the essentially identical spirit of the Western civilization which sprang from Greece and Rome were exhibited in their various aspects. The audience of the first year were eager to continue, and in the second course, in August 1916, the conception and the fact of 'Progress' were studied, being the dynamical aspect of the static conditions of 'Unity' which was the subject of the first.

The volume following this second course, called 'Progress and History', soon reached six impressions and has been used for study in various universities.

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F. S. M.

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